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**Objects of Popular Devotion:
Longquan Ceramic Religious Figures
during the Song-Yuan-Ming Period**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2014

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates ceramic figures portraying religious images made at the kilns of Longquan in Zhejiang province, China between the Song and the Ming periods. Through a thorough examination of the images' iconography alongside further related sources drawn from diverse areas of study, the thesis offers a new understanding of the cultural and religious importance of the figures and examines how they became prevalent in Longquan and how they were used and valued within and beyond the Chinese mainland. The range of figures examined, including Buddhas, bodhisattvas, deified monks, Daoist deities, immortals and popular gods, allows an exploration of religious beliefs and practices in Zhejiang at that time and demonstrates in particular the significance of the medium of ceramic in the development of popular devotion and its visual imagery in late imperial China.

Small ceramic religious figures have so far gone unnoticed, in both the fields of Chinese ceramics and Chinese religious sculpture. Notwithstanding, they are an important part of the long, rich history of Chinese ceramic sculpture. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach, this exploration of Longquan figures demonstrates that small ceramic religious figures are illustrative of the rich visual and material culture of Chinese religion and provides a glimpse into the spiritual lives and religious customs of the Chinese in the pre-modern period.

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This thesis uses the Pinyin system of romanisation for Chinese characters, with the exception of those cited from other English books. The Hepburn system is used for the Japanese language and the Revised Romanisation system for the Korean language. Exceptions include personal names that follow alternative spelling, for example ‘Kim Youngmi’. All Chinese, Japanese and Korean names are rendered in East Asian order, surname first, unless the individual’s name is more widely known in Western order, for example ‘Chün-fang Yü’.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

act.	active
approx.	approximately
attr.	attributed
BCE	Before Common Era
cat.	catalogue
CE	Common Era
d.	died
DZ	Daozang 道藏
ed.	editor, edition, edited by
et al.	and others
Fig.	Figure
Figs	Figures
KG	Kaogu 考古
KGXB	Kaogu xuebao 考古學報
no.	number
nos	numbers
pl.	plate
pls	plates
r.	reigned
rev.	revised
TOCS	Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society
WW	Wenwu 文物
vol.	volume
vols	volumes

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- 3.54 Oil lamp in the form of an attendant. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 21.6 cm. Shojyoko-ji, Fujisawa. From Kokuritsu rekishi minzoku hakubutsukan ed., *Tōjiki no bunkashi*, fig. 15.
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- 4.21 Guanyin and Weituo. Yuan dynasty. Limestone. Niche no. 35, Feilafeng, Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. From Gao Nianhua 高念華 ed., *Feilafeng zaoxiang* 飛來峰造像 [Feilafeng peak sculptures] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2002), 202, fig. 170.
- 4.22 Guanyin and Weituo. Ming dynasty. Painted clay. Qianfodian, Shuanglin Temple, Pingyao, Shanxi province. From Li Chun 李純 ed., *Caisu yishu mingzhu: Shuanglinsi* 彩塑藝術明珠：雙林寺 [The painted sculpture of Shuanglin temple] (Shijiazhuang: Hebei meishu chubanshe, 2002), pl. 138.
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- 4.30 Guanyin shrine. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 31.4 cm. From Benjamin J. Stein, *Longquan Celadons* (Amsterdam: Benjamin J. Stein, 1982), pl. 44.
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- 4.32 Guanyin and Zhenwu shrine. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. From *Orientations*, April 2013, 36.
- 4.33 Guanyin and Zhenwu shrine. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 36.5 cm. Tokyo National Museum (TG 1353). From Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan 東京国立博物館 ed., *Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan zuhan mokuroku Chūgoku tōji hen II* 東京国立博物館図版目録：中国陶磁篇 [Illustrated catalogue of Tokyo National Museum: Chinese ceramics] (Tokyo: Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan, 1990), 133, no. 519.
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- 4.38 Budai. Jin dynasty. Cizhou ware. Height 35.6 cm. Wangye Museum, Shenzhen. From Shenzhen bowuguan, *Jingcai*, pl. 6.
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- 4.41 Budai. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 16 cm. Tianjin Museum. Photo courtesy of the museum.
- 4.42 Budai. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 16 cm. Tianjin Museum. From Tianjin bowuguan 天津博物館 ed., *Tianjin bowuguan cangci*, 天津博物館藏瓷 [Ceramics from the Tianjin Museum] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe), 2012. pl. 116.
- 4.43 Jigong. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 20.7 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B62P158).
- 4.44 Jigong. Ming dynasty. Woodblock print in the 1569 edition of the *Recorded Sayings*. From Meir Shahr, *Crazy Ji: Chinese Religions and Popular Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: University Asia Center, 1988), fig. 1.
- 4.45 Shang Xi. *Guandi Capturing an Enemy General*. Ming dynasty. Hanging scroll; ink and colour on silk. 200 x 237 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing. From Barnhart et al., *Ten Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, fig. 183.
- 4.46 Guandi. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 22.1 cm. Tokyo National Museum (TG2111).
- 4.47 Guandi. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 35.6 cm. Asian Art Museum, San Francisco (B69P28).
- 4.48 Guandi. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 34.75 cm. Private Collection. From Southeast Oriental Asian Ceramic Society and National Museum of Singapore ed., *Chinese Celadons and Other Related Wares in Southeast Asia*, pl. 165.

- 4.49 Zhengfu caishen. 20th century. Woodblock print; ink and colour on paper. British Museum (1982,1217,O.53).
- 4.50 Caishen. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 16.9 cm. Wenzhou Museum. From Wenzhou bowuguan 温州博物館 ed., *Wenzhou gutaoci* 温州古陶瓷 [Ancient pottery and porcelain of Wenzhou] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2001), pl. 144.
- 4.51 Caishen with two attendants. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 23.6 cm. Beijing Art Museum. Photo courtesy of the museum.
- 4.52 Kuixing. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. 12.5 cm. Zhejiang Provincial Museum. From *Zhejiangsheng bowuguan* 浙江省博物館 ed., *Shiwai wanxiang: daojiao wenwu zhan* 世外万象：道教文物展 [Myriad images beyond: Daoist art exhibition] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin meishu chubanshe, 2013), 185.
- 4.53 Ding Yunpeng. *Wenchang, the God of Literature*. Ming dynasty, dated 1596. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. 117.5 x 46.4 cm. British Museum (1936,1009.0.129).
- 4.54 Guanyin with a child. Ming dynasty. Cizhou ware. Height 35.4 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B60 P523).
- 4.55 Guanyin with a child. Ming dynasty. *Fahua* ware. Shanxi Provincial Museum. Photo by author.
- 4.56 He Chaozong 何朝宗 (act. early 17th century). Guanyin with a child. Qing dynasty. Dehua ware. Height 28 cm. Rijksmuseum (AK-MAK-658).
- 4.57 Guanyin with a child and two attendants. Late Ming or early Qing dynasty. Dehua ware. Height 38 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum (19-1886).

CHRONOLOGY

Neolithic	circa 10000-2000 BCE
Xia Dynasty	circa 2100-1600 BCE
Shang Dynasty	circa 1600-1050 BCE
Zhou Dynasty	circa 1050-221 BCE
Western Zhou	circa 1050-771 BCE
Eastern Zhou	circa 770-221 BCE
Spring and Autumn	770- 476 BCE
Warring States	475-221 BCE
Qin Dynasty	221-206 BCE
Han Dynasty	206 BCE-220 CE
Western Han	206 BCE-8 CE
Eastern Han	25-220 CE
Three Kingdoms	220-280
Jin Dynasty	265-420
Western Jin	265-317
Eastern Jin	317-420
Northern and Southern Dynasties	386-589
Sui Dynasty	581-618
Tang Dynasty	618-907
Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms	907-960
Song Dynasty	960-1279
Northern Song	960-1127
Southern Song	1127-1279
Liao Dynasty	907-1125
Jin Dynasty	1115-1234
Yuan Dynasty	1271-1368
Ming Dynasty	1368-1644
Qing Dynasty	1644-1911
Republic of China	1912-1949
People's Republic of China	1949-present

INTRODUCTION

Figures constitute one of the most diverse and innovative products of the Longquan 龍泉 kilns — China's largest celadon-producing centres located in the south-western region of Zhejiang 浙江 province [Map 1].¹ To date, more than



Map 1 Longquan location.

¹ The term 'figure' as used in this thesis refers to a representation of an independent sculptural form that is not a vessel or part of vessel. As for the term 'celadon', exactly how and when this came into use is not clear, but it possibly derives from the greyish-green costume of a character, the shepherd Céladon, from the French pastoral romance, *L'Astrée* by Honoré d'Urfé (1568-1625), published between 1607 and 1627. Longquan wares present in Europe since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were presumably connected to the name celadon, which, in turn, became a generally accepted term in the West, denoting both a blue-green glaze and wares made with this glaze. Several celadons in European collections have provenances that can be traced back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The earliest documented Chinese celadon in Europe is the famous Longquan ware bowl with silver-gilt mounts embellished with the arms of Count Philip of Katzenelnbogen, also called the 'Katzenelnbogen Bowl'. Today, it is in the collection of the Hessisches Landesmuseum in Kassel, Germany.

500 kiln sites have been discovered by Chinese archaeologists in the vicinity of Longquan. Most are situated along the Longquan River 龍泉溪 in Lishui 麗水 and Yunhe 雲和, with Longquan being the centre of production. In addition, there are numerous kiln sites along the Songxi River 松溪, south toward Qingyuan 慶元 and along the middle and lower reaches of the Ou River 甌江, toward Yongjia 永嘉 [Map 2].



Map 2 Distribution of major kiln sites in Longquan.

Thanks to its broad range of products and their impressive distribution in both domestic and export markets, Longquan ware was one of the most important types of ceramic produced in late imperial China from the Song 宋 dynasty (960-1279) through to the Qing 清 dynasty (1644-1911). Although there is no

evidence of the proportion figures represented within the celadon output of the Longquan kilns, it was probably small. Although few in number, celadon figures have nevertheless consistently been excavated in China since the 1960s. Numerous significant examples have also been preserved in museums and private collections throughout the world, providing intriguing material evidence for the production of celadon figures in Longquan from the Southern Song 南宋 dynasty (1127-1279) to the Ming 明 dynasty (1368-1644). Surviving evidence shows that Longquan potters developed a distinctive sculptural tradition and created a large variety of images over a long period of time. Their subjects are predominantly religious and vary from Buddhas, bodhisattvas and deified monks to Daoist deities, immortals and popular gods. Many of these images hardly appeared in other regions and were confined to Zhejiang, suggesting that they might have played an important role in popular worship in the region. However, these figures have been largely neglected in the scholarly record and remain little-understood, although they constitute one of the most interesting aspects of Longquan ware.

It is only in recent years that studies of Longquan ceramic sculptures have been conducted. Jessica Harrison-Hall delivered the earliest account discussing Longquan sculpture production in 1997.² In her article, Harrison-Hall briefly examined both religious and secular sculptures, such as incense burners and water-droppers in human or animal forms, with reference to the British Museum's collection. Despite a lack of contextualisation, her introductory survey provided

² Jessica Harrison-Hall, "Representational Longquan Wares: The Making and Function of Yuan and Ming Dynasty Ceramics," *Apollo* (March 1997): 30-5.

an overview of the ceramic sculpture tradition at the Longquan kilns, including religious images, and stimulated further research.

Since 2010, when I began my research, interest in Longquan ceramic sculptures has been increased. In a short paper presented at the annual meeting of the Ancient Ceramic Society of China in 2011, Gao Yingshuang focused on Longquan religious images.³ Gao discussed a handful of examples of Longquan religious figures exclusively from Chinese museum collections and left out many notable pieces preserved outside China. Some vague but valid points about the relation between Longquan ceramic figures and the socio-religious context of China during the Song, Yuan and Ming periods were made. In 2012, Raphael Wong Wai Kwan of The Chinese University of Hong Kong completed his MPhil thesis on the subject with a particular focus on niche sculptures, which constitute a sizeable group of sculptural forms predominantly made at Longquan during the Ming period.⁴ Wong Wai Kwan examined the production and consumption of 26 examples of this type as well as the religious beliefs they represent. Although he provided a detailed study of some of the most important Longquan religious sculptures, his thesis dealt only with a specific sculptural style and time period.

Despite the growing body of studies on Longquan ceramic sculptures detailed above, the field of research is still in its infancy. Few extensive studies have focused entirely on this category of objects and coverage remains

³ Gao Yingshuang 高英爽, "Longquanyao cisu," 龍泉窯瓷塑 [Longquan porcelain statues], in *Longquanyao yanjiu*, 龍泉窯研究 [Research on Longquan kiln], ed. Zhongguo gutaoci xuehui 中國古陶瓷學會 (Beijing: Gugong chubanshe, 2011), 121-28.

⁴ Raphael Wong Wai Kwan, "A Study of Religious Niche Sculptures of the Longquan Kilns" (Unpublished MPhil thesis, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2012). I am thankful to Jessica Harrison-Hall who brought this thesis to my attention.

fragmentary, both thematically and chronologically. My thesis examines Longquan ceramic religious figures, from the beginning to the end of their production (1200s to 1600s), so as to offer a comprehensive study of the subject, in the context of the religious and popular beliefs that prevailed in China at the time, particularly in Zhejiang. A further intention is to illuminate the significance of small ceramic religious figures, mostly intended for domestic worship, within the development of popular devotion and visual imagery in late imperial China in order to propose a new way of looking at an important but overlooked category of artefacts. Consequently, this thesis aims to suggest a fresh approach to the understanding of Chinese religious traditions, beliefs and practices.

While based on surviving artefacts, this study also covers comparative iconographically-related visual materials (e.g. sculptures in metal, wood and stone sculptures as well as paintings and prints). It also draws upon a wide range of textual sources, including dynastic histories, Buddhist and Daoist scriptures, hagiographies, vernacular novels and gazetteers. By critically examining the individual objects and the iconography of their forms and decoration in greater depth than has been done previously and through an interdisciplinary analysis of the literary, historical, social and religious contexts of the figures, this thesis explores how this particular artistic form became prevalent at the Longquan kilns during the Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties, and how these objects were used and valued within and beyond the Chinese mainland. The history, meanings and uses of Longquan religious figures are the primary foci of my inquiry.

The thesis comprises four chapters and is structured chronologically. While a linear structure of the discussion can have certain limitations, it is informed by the archaeology of the site of manufacture and reflects well-defined phases of production at Longquan. In order to give a wider perspective, Chapter One is devoted to a historical and critical survey of Chinese ceramic sculpture from the Neolithic period to the Northern Song 北宋 (960-1127) and Liao 遼 (907-1125) periods, examining the types of ceramic sculptures created prior to the beginning of Longquan production. In particular, the chapter traces the evolution of the few surviving examples of ceramic religious images, informs the central questions of the thesis and lays the foundation for the discussion of ceramic religious figures from Longquan.

The relocation of the imperial court to Hangzhou in 1132 contributed to substantial developments in the ceramic industry of Zhejiang. During the Southern Song dynasty, Longquan became the main celadon production centre in China. Chapter Two takes a brief look at Zhejiang ceramic production within the region's unique historical and cultural circumstances during the Southern Song period. Material evidence from excavations suggests that, by the late Southern Song dynasty, the production of religious figures had been well established in Longquan. The earliest extant examples may be three small figures of Daoist immortals unearthed at the Dayao 大窯 kiln site. The discussion delves into Southern Song Longquan figures as well as contemporaneous ceramic figures made outside Zhejiang but unearthed in the region. These are *qingbai* porcelain figures from Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, and represent the bodhisattva

Avalokiteshvara, known in Chinese as Guanyin, whose cult became particularly important in Zhejiang from the Song dynasty onward. By investigating the iconography, style and contexts of these ceramic figures, Chapter Two demonstrates that the emergence of Longquan religious images and the vibrant cultural and religious landscape of Zhejiang at this time were fundamentally interconnected.

Sculpture production in Longquan flourished further in the Yuan and Ming dynasties. The development of Yuan dynasty Longquan religious figures is the theme of Chapter Three. During the Mongol era, these objects were not only consumed and used in Zhejiang; examples have been discovered outside the region. In 1966, the archaeological excavations of residential sites in the capital of the Yuan (Dadu 大都, present-day Beijing 北京) yielded several Longquan Buddhist figures. Furthermore, Longquan figures were not only used in China but were also shipped abroad. A group of four small celadon figures was recovered from the Sinan wreck — a merchant vessel that sank off the southwest coast of Korea at Sinan 新安 while it was most likely en route from Ningbo 寧波, China to Japan in 1323. The four celadon figures portraying religious images (Daoist immortals and Guanyin), are not only among the rarest and most unusual ceramic pieces in the context of the Sinan ship itself, but are also among the most important discoveries of Yuan celadon sculptures ever made. Found in a dated context, they bear testimony to the Yuan evolution of this distinctive Longquan ceramic type, and furthermore, show the development of popular devotional icons and their cults in Zhejiang during this time. The major focus of the chapter is upon

this group of Sinan figures, examining the iconography and function of each in detail. They are considered in their religious and socio-cultural context in an attempt to understand their meaning and importance for fourteenth-century East Asian trade.

The final chapter of the thesis explores the Longquan religious figure industry during the Ming period. Again, extant pieces form the core of the analysis. Two dated Daoist shrines are representative of the Ming era: one from 1385 and the other from 1406. Such devotional shrines represent the most characteristic and unique sculptural styles from Longquan. A wider repertoire of religious images was also created alongside Buddhist and Daoist images, with diverse images of Chinese popular gods also made in Longquan. This chapter considers the reasons for, and the significance of, the production and proliferation of small religious figures during the Ming dynasty. After the Ming period, there is very little evidence for the production of religious figures in Longquan. The reasons for this decline in production are beyond the scope of this thesis but as the final chapter demonstrates, it is likely to be associated with material, economic and social factors.

What follows is an original exploration of the ceramic religious figures from Longquan situating them within the rich material culture of Chinese religion. It is a study of ceramics, but also of religious practice and visibility, which opens a window into the cultural landscape of pre-modern China.

CHAPTER ONE

A Historical and Critical Survey of Chinese Ceramic Sculpture from the Neolithic to the Liao and Northern Song Dynasties

Introduction

In China, ceramic sculpture has a long history, extending back to prehistoric times. Large quantities of ceramic figures from various periods survive today. Many significant archaeological discoveries have been made over the last century and new excavations continue to add information to our knowledge of Chinese sculptural traditions. In addition, numerous examples have also been found in the export context and are preserved in public and private collections throughout the world.

Chinese ceramic sculptures were produced for multiple purposes. Figures of humans and animals have been studied extensively within the burial tradition, where they are usually classified as ‘tomb figures’ since tombs are the main context in which they are found. There is a large volume of information about the themes, iconography and style of these funerary articles from each period. In contrast, ceramic figures portraying ‘religious’ images have remained unexplored until recently,⁵ except for large-scale temple sculpture, which is in fact a minor

⁵ A pioneering example of such research is Wu Mingdi’s essay on ceramic Buddhist sculptures. In this introductory survey, Wu demonstrates the wealth of ceramic material for the study of Buddhist art. See Wu Mingdi 吴明娣, “Zhongguo gudai taoci fojiao zaoxiang shulüe,” 中國古代陶瓷佛教造像述略 [A brief discussion on ancient Chinese ceramic Buddhist sculptures], *Fojiao yanjiu* 佛教研究 (2002): 339-47. For a brief account of the same topic by the author, see Wu Mingdi, “Zhongguo gudai taoci fojiao zaoxiang kao,” 中國古代陶瓷佛教造像考 [A thought on ancient Chinese Buddhist sculptures], *Diaosu* 雕塑 2 (2002): 6-8.

aspect of the use of ceramic religious sculpture in China. Nonetheless, as we shall see in this chapter, a wide range of types, forms and sizes of ceramic religious sculptures have been found in a variety of contexts from temples to tombs across China, and over the course of their long history, different types of images and iconography have appeared alongside new functions and meanings. By examining the origins and development of Chinese ceramic sculpture, this chapter will provide a survey of this category of objects, in which Longquan religious figures could be better understood.

Ceramic Sculptures from the Neolithic to the Han

Neolithic

The development of ceramic sculpture probably started in China with pottery production that began during the Neolithic Era (circa 10000-2000 BCE). Sculpted images of humans emerged in the major Neolithic cultures of China; they have been found at numerous archaeological sites, dating as early as the sixth millennium BCE.⁶

Archaeological finds reveal that ceramic figures played a much more important part in later Neolithic cultures, especially the Hongshan 紅山 culture (circa 3500-2500 BCE) of northeast China (in present-day Liaoning province and Inner Mongolia). Large-scale excavations and surveys at Hongshan sites

⁶ Xiaoneng Yang, *Sculpture of Prehistoric China* (Hong Kong: Tai Dao Publishing, 1988), 14, pls 31, 32, 104, 105; Helmut Brinker, "On the Origin of the Human Image in Chinese Art," *Kaikodo Journal* (Spring 1997):18-47, figs 12, 40, 41, 42.

conducted since 1979 have uncovered a multitude of clay sculptures. More than twenty fragments of human figures were found near an altar-like stone structure, featuring both round and square platforms, at Dongshanzui 東山嘴 in Kazuo 喀左, Liaoning province.⁷ Among these, two small naked torsos — one 5 cm and the other 7.8 cm tall — have particularly intrigued scholars [Figs 1.1 and 1.2].



Figs 1.1 and 1.2 Torsos of naked women. Hongshan culture, circa 3500 BCE. Clay. Height 5 cm (left), 7.8 cm (right). Excavated at Dongshanzui, Kazuo, Liaoning province. Liaoning Provincial Institute of Archaeology and Cultural Relics, Shenyang.

Although the figures lack heads, their protruding bellies and plump hips possibly depict pregnant women. Therefore, some scholars have associated these figures with a fertility cult, identifying them as fertility goddesses.⁸ Evidence to support this hypothesis is scant, but the carefully arranged stone structures, seemingly

⁷ Guo Dashun 郭大順 and Zhang Keju 張剋舉, “Liaoningsheng Kazuoxian Dongshanzui Hongshan wenhua jianzhu qunzhi fajue jianbao,” 遼寧省喀左縣東山嘴紅山文化建築群址發掘簡報 [Brief report on excavations at the Hongshan culture architectural complex of Dongshanzui, Kazuo county, Liaoning province], *WW* 11 (1984): 1-11.

⁸ For example, Yu Weichao 俞偉超 et al., “Zuotan Dongshanzui yizhi,” 坐談東山嘴遺址 [Informal discussion on Dongshanzui site], *WW* 11 (1984):12-21.

forming a ritual site, suggest that the two figures might have had some ritual significance.

The most significant discovery of Neolithic ceramic human figures found to date may be the large clay sculptures excavated from the so-called ‘Goddess Temple’ at Niuheliang 牛河梁, 50 km away from Dongshanzui.⁹ Fragments of at least six individual clay sculptures were excavated inside the semi-subterranean structure. Their sizes differ, the largest being almost three times life-size. Arguably the most interesting find is a clay head 22.5 cm tall, embellished with inlaid blue-green jade eyes [Fig. 1.3].¹⁰ Although no figures from Niuheliang have been found intact and none can be reconstructed completely, the excavators have identified them as female because of the breast fragments and have concluded that the structure must originally have housed a group of goddess sculptures. Like the two figures discovered at Dongshanzui, the Niuheliang human figures have been the subject of much discussion over the past decades. It is debatable whether the structure actually served as a temple and whether the sculptures constituted the objects of goddess worship. The Niuheliang site has yet to be fully excavated; therefore our knowledge of the ‘temple’ is not complete. Nevertheless, as several scholars point out, the lack of any settlement nearby indicates that the ‘temple’

⁹ Liaoningsheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 遼寧省文物考古研究所, “Liaoning Niuheliang Hongshan wenhua ‘Nüshenmiao’ yu jishizhong qun fague jianbao,” 遼寧牛河梁紅山文化 ‘女神廟’ 與積石塚群發掘簡報 [Brief report on the excavation of the ‘Goddess Temple’ and the stone heap tomb group of the Hongshan culture in Niuheliang, Liaoning], *WW* 8 (1986): 1-17; Liaoningsheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 遼寧省文物考古研究所, *Niuheliang Hongshan wenhua yizhi yu yuqi jingcui* 牛河梁紅山文化遺址與玉器精粹 [A short presentation of the Niuheliang archaeological site, Hongshan culture, and its jade artefacts] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1997).

¹⁰ Sun Shoudao 孫守道 and Guo Dashun 郭大順, “Niuheliang Hongshan wenhua nüshen touxiang de faxian yu yanjiu,” 牛河梁紅山文化女神頭像的發現與研究 [The discovery and research on a goddess’s head from Niuheliang of the Hongshan culture], *WW* 8 (1986): 18-24.

may well have been an important sacred site, suggesting that these clay female figures might have been linked to religious beliefs and rituals of the Hongshan culture.



Fig. 1.3 Face of 'Goddess'. Hongshan culture, circa 3500 BCE. Clay, 22.5 x 16.5 cm. Excavated from the 'temple' structure at Niuheliang, Liaoning province. Liaoning Provincial Institute of Archaeology and Cultural Relics, Shenyang.

Another important Neolithic culture that produced ceramic human figures was the Shijiahe 石家河 culture (circa 2500-2000 BCE), one of the late Neolithic cultures that centred on the middle Yangzi River region in Hubei province. Thousands of clay figures have been unearthed at Dengjiawan 邓家湾 in Tianmen 天门, Hubei province, starting from the 1950s. Extensive archeological investigations have revealed that the area may have been a ritual site. Most of the excavated figures are between 5 and 10 cm in height and were formed by kneading small pieces of clay and joining them together. Two miniature figures

excavated in 1987 are perhaps the best-known examples of this type [Fig. 1.4].¹¹ Both figures are 9.5 cm high and wear caps and earrings. They sit upright in a rigid, formal pose, holding fish in their hands. There is little evidence about what purpose they may have served, but their iconography and excavation context possibly suggest some kind of ritual use.¹²



Fig. 1.4 Human figures. Shijiahe culture, circa 2500-2000 BCE. Clay. Height 9.5 cm. Excavated from pit 67 at Dengjiawan, Tianmen, Hubei province. Jingzhou Museum.

Such prehistoric ceramic sculptures have received much attention from both archaeologists and historians because they are abundant and provide substantial evidence for the formation of Chinese civilization. Nonetheless, our knowledge is fragmentary as textual evidence is lacking and theories on the function and significance of the ceramic figures from the Neolithic Era are

¹¹ Shihe kaogudui 石河考古隊, “Hubeisheng Shihe yizhi qun 1987 nian fajue jianbao,” 湖北省石河遺址群1987年發掘簡報 [Preliminary report on the excavation at Shihe, Hubei in 1987], *WW* 8 (1990): 1-16.

¹² Jessica Rawson ed., *Mysteries of Ancient China: New Discoveries from the Early Dynasties* (London: British Museum, 1996), 47.

speculative. Enigmatic as they are, these early examples offer the earliest evidence of the Chinese tradition of ceramic sculpture.

Shang and Zhou

The Shang 商 — China's first historical dynasty — ruled the country for a long period (circa 1600-1050 BCE), marking the midpoint of China's Bronze Age, which began circa 2000 BCE. A significant amount of archaeological work has been conducted at Shang sites since the early twentieth century, and tombs and other archaeological deposits have produced several clay figures of human images.¹³ Thus, in the Shang, most of the ceramic figures have been associated with burial, unlike those of the Neolithic period. A notable example of late Shang sculpture is a pair of figures recovered from Anyang in Henan province in 1937 [Fig. 1.5].¹⁴ Although crudely modelled, these two human figures, possibly a female and a male, are assumed to represent prisoners or slaves because of their fettered hands tied either before or behind them.¹⁵ Furthermore, their necks are banded by some kind of shackle. Several such figures have allegedly been discovered in graves, but their function and meaning are obscure. There was a continuation of ceramic figure making into the succeeding Zhou 周 dynasty (circa

¹³ Shang dynasty human figures have been found at Zhengzhou, Anyang and Shanxian in Henan province, Yumen in Gansu province, and Gaocheng in Hebei province. Wu Hung, "From Neolithic to the Han," in *Chinese Sculpture*, ed. Angela Howard et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 28.

¹⁴ Cao Zhezhi 曹者祉 and Sun Binggen 孫秉根 ed., *Zhongguo gudai yong* 中國古代俑 [Ancient Chinese tomb figures] (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 1996), 4-7.

¹⁵ Xiaoneng Yang, *Sculpture of Xia & Shang China* (Hong Kong: Tai Dao Publishing, 1988), 37.

1050-771 BCE). Surviving examples before the Eastern Zhou 東周 (circa 770-221 BCE) are nevertheless few.



Fig. 1.5 Human figures. Late Shang dynasty. Clay. Unearthed at Anyang, Henan province. Academia Sinica, Taipei.

It was not until the late Spring and Autumn 春秋 (770-476 BCE) and early Warring States 戰國 (475-221 BCE) periods that ceramic sculpture production surged considerably. A new type of and function for ceramic figures developed, along with the emergence of *mingqi* 明器 [spirit articles]. The *mingqi* were items specifically designed and produced for placement within the tomb and were never meant to be used by the living. A type of *mingqi* that developed into an important sculptural tradition during the subsequent Qin and Han dynasties was the funerary figure. It is still unclear when these human figures — exclusively produced for funerary purposes — first appeared in China.¹⁶ However, most scholars agree that

¹⁶ Some scholars believe that Shang dynasty pieces are the earliest tomb figures, but as Wu Hung noted, there is insufficient evidence to affirm this hypothesis. Wu Hung, “On Tomb Figurines: The Beginning of a Visual Tradition,” in *Body and Face in Chinese Visual Culture*, ed. Wu Hung (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Centre, 2005), 13-4.

the appearance and popularity of tomb figures was associated with a gradual decline in human sacrifices, which were widely performed during earlier periods as part of the funerary rites. Archaeological findings support the view that these figures had emerged as substitutes for some human sacrifices by the mid-Eastern Zhou era; they were frequently placed next to or around the deceased, following the burial arrangement of human sacrifices. In addition to archaeological evidence, literary records indicate that the emergence of tomb figures coincided with the time of Confucius 孔子 (551-479 BCE). According to the *Mengzi* 孟子 [Mencius], Confucius condemned human sacrifices at funerals and even criticised the use of *yong* 俑 or tomb figures because their lifelike form implied human sacrifices.¹⁷

One of the oldest tombs discovered with ceramic human figures accompanying the dead was discovered in 1990 at Nülangshan 女郎山 in Zhangqiu 章丘, Shandong province, a site that can be dated to the fourth century BCE [Fig. 1.6].¹⁸ Excavations at the site have uncovered both human victims and a large assemblage of ceramic figures. Both human sacrifices (*rensheng* 人牲) and ‘companions in death’ (*renxun* 人殉) accompanied the deceased, and a group of

¹⁷ James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics, Vol. 2: The Work of Mencius*, 2nd ed. rev. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), 133-34. Legge’s translation of the passage reads: Chung-ni [Confucius] said, “Was he not without posterity who first made wooden images to bury with the dead? So he said, because that man made the semblances of men, and used them for that purpose:- what shall be thought of him who causes his people to die of hunger?”

¹⁸ Li Rixun 李曰訓, “Shandong Zhangqiu Nülangshan Zhanguo mu chutu yuewu taoyong ji youguan wenti,” 山東章丘女郎山戰國墓出土樂舞陶俑及有關問題 [Pottery figures of musicians and dancers unearthed from the tomb of the Warring States period at Mount Nülang in Zhangqiu county, Shandong] *WW* 3 (1993): 1-6.



Fig. 1.6 Figures representing a group of dancers, musicians and members of audience. Warring States period, 4th century BCE. Painted earthenware. Height 6-8 cm. Excavated at Nùlangshan, Zhangqiu, Shandong province.

small human figures further accompanied a female ‘companion in death’.¹⁹ The fact that human victims and ceramic figures appeared in a single burial context suggests that funerary figures were designed to play a specific role. Most ceramic figures appear to represent musicians and dancers. This signifies that they were not merely substitutes for human sacrifices but rather replacements for human companions necessary for performing specific functions and for serving the deceased in the afterlife.²⁰

Qin and Han

After the unification in 221 BCE under the Qin, production of funerary figures became more widespread throughout China. The most celebrated example of ceramic sculpture from this period is the so-called ‘Terracotta

¹⁹ Scholars have distinguished two types of human victims as ‘human offerings’ (*rensheng* 人牲) and ‘companions in death’ (*renxun* 人殉). For a detailed discussion of human victims, see Huang Zhanyue 黄展岳, *Zhongguo gudai de rensheng yu renxun* 中國古代的人牲與人殉 [Human sacrifices in ancient China] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1990).

²⁰ Wu, “On Tomb Figurines,” 17-8.

Army' (*bingmayong* 兵馬俑) [Fig. 1.7]. The sculptures were buried in pits as part of the vast tomb complex of Qin Shihuang 秦始皇 (r. 246-210 BCE) or First Emperor of Qin, also known as China's First Emperor. Indicative of Qin Shihuang's grandeur and military success, these durable clay figures were very likely created for the purpose of being buried with him and guarding him eternally in his posthumous residence.²¹



Fig. 1.7 Terracotta warriors in Pit 1 at the tomb complex of the First Emperor of Qin.

The terracotta army was accidentally discovered by local farmers in 1974 at Lintong 臨潼, in the vicinity of Xi'an 西安, the provincial capital of Shaanxi province.²² The sheer size and number of the ceramic figures contained within

²¹ Lothar Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 67.

²² Archaeological surveys and excavations have been carried out since the mid-1970s and are still on-going. For a comprehensive account on the excavation and study of the tomb and burial finds, see Yuan Zhongyi 袁仲一, *Qin Shihuang ling de kaogu faxian yu yanjiu* 秦始皇陵的考古發現與研究 [Archaeological discoveries and research on the Emperor Qin Shihuang's mausoleum] (Xi'an: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2002).

these subterranean pits is extraordinary. More than 1,900 figures of warriors and horses arranged in battle formation have been unearthed so far from the four excavated pits, and it is estimated that the pits house some 7,000 to 8,000 figures. Their artistic quality is high and the information they furnish extremely rich.

The most remarkable facts about these terracotta figures are their verisimilitude and their life-size height (some stand over 190 cm in height — for instance, the figures of generals), apparently unique achievements of the Qin [Fig. 1.8]. There had been no such large or realistic ceramic sculptures prior to the Qin.²³ Each was sculpted with life-like facial features. However, the manufacture



Fig. 1.8 Armoured general. Qin dynasty. Earthenware. Height 196 cm. Qin Shihuang Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum.

²³ Lukas Nickel argues that the terracotta warriors cannot be assigned to an indigenous Chinese tradition and that the creation of these monumental sculptures may have been the result of contacts with the contemporary Hellenistic world. See Lukas Nickel, “The First Emperor and Sculpture in China,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 76, no. 3 (October 2013): 413-47.

of the army was a result of a modular mass production system.²⁴ The evidence of this mastery of both representational ability and ceramic technology has radically changed our perceptions about China's early sculptural tradition. It can be argued that the terracotta army opened a new chapter in the history of Chinese ceramic sculpture and figural representation.

The succeeding Han 漢 dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) also played a significant role in the development of Chinese ceramic sculpture. Archaeological excavations have unearthed a large volume of human figures from many Han dynasty burial sites. Several groups of early Western Han figures followed the Qin tradition of creating a large underground army. The most notable among these archaeological finds are the polychrome painted earthenware figures recovered from the tombs of two early Han generals, probably Zhou Bo 周勃 and his son



Fig. 1.9 Cavalry. Western Han dynasty. Painted earthenware. Height 69 cm. From a Han tomb excavated at Yangjiawan, Xianyang, Shaanxi province. Xianyang Municipal Museum.

²⁴ For a detailed discussion of the manufacturing procedures, see Ledderose, "A Magic Army for the Emperor," in *Ten Thousand Things*, 51-73. Also see Lucas Nickel, "The Terracotta Army," in *The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army*, ed. Jane Portal (London: British Museum Press, 2007), 159-79.

Zhou Yafu 周亞夫 (d. 143 BCE), at Yangjiawan 杨家湾 in Xianyang, Shaanxi.²⁵ [Fig. 1.9].

Although large numbers of figures from the early Han period made up underground armies, growing interest in representing domestic life progressively enhanced to the popularity of other types of figures such as attendants, servants, guards and performers — people who were necessary for a comfortable and enjoyable afterlife. Excavated Han tomb figures of domestic types vastly outnumber those of military ones.²⁶ A group of early ceramic figures of this kind came from sacrificial pits associated with the tomb of Empress Dou 竇皇后 (d.



Fig. 1.10 Female attendants. Western Han dynasty. Earthenware. Height 53 cm. Excavated from pits associated with the tomb of Empress Dou, at Renjiapo, Xi'an. Shaanxi Provincial Museum.

²⁵ Shaanxisheng wenhuahui, bowuguan 陝西省文化會, 博物館 and Xianyangshi bowuguan 咸陽市博物館, “Xianyang Yangjiawan Han mu fajue jianbao,” 咸陽杨家湾漢墓發掘簡報 [Preliminary report on the excavation of the Han tomb at Yangjiawan, Xianyang], *WW* 10 (1977): 10-21; Wang Renbo, “General Comments on Chinese Funerary Sculpture,” in *The Quest for Eternity: Chinese Ceramic Sculptures from the People's Republic of China*, ed. Susan L. Caroselli (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 47.

²⁶ Wu, “From Neolithic to the Han,” 76.

135 BCE), wife of Emperor Wen 文帝 (r. 180-157 BCE).²⁷ The tomb at Renjiapo 任家坡, near Xi'an, yielded several earthenware figures, mostly female court attendants [Fig. 1.10].

Diverse regional sculptural styles emerged during the Han, and their subjects are more varied than those of the Qin. A Western Han rectangular tableau excavated in 1969 from Wuyingshan 無影山 near Ji'nan 濟南 best exemplifies the many representations of amusements and entertainment from Shandong province [Fig. 1.11].²⁸ Furthermore, a number of Han royal tombs in eastern



Fig. 1.11 Group of musicians, dancers, acrobats and spectators. Western Han dynasty. Painted earthenware. 47.5 x 67 cm. Excavated from a Western Han tomb at Wuyingshan, Ji'nan, Shandong province. National Museum of China.

China (especially around the Han family's home town of Xuzhou 徐州, Jiangsu province) contained an array of human figures with remarkably preserved painted

²⁷ Wang Xueli 王學理 and Wu Zhenfeng 吳鎮烽, "Xi'an Renjiapo Han ling cong zangkeng de fajue," 西安任家坡漢陵從葬坑的發掘 [Excavation of the pits for funerary objects accompanying a Han mausoleum at Renjiapo, Xi'an], *KG* 2 (1976): 129-133, 75.

²⁸ Ji'nanshi bowuguan 濟南市博物館, "Shitan Ji'nan Wuyingshan chutu de Xi Han yuewu zaji yanyin taoyong," 試談濟南無影山出土的西漢樂舞, 雜技, 宴飲陶俑 [A tentative discussion of the ceramic figures of musicians, dancers, acrobats and banqueters unearthed from a Western Han tomb at Wuyingshan, Ji'nan], *WW* 5 (1972):19-23.

decoration.²⁹ In the southwest, archaeological excavations at Han tombs have revealed many other kinds of ceramic sculptures that reflect the social life and activities of the time. Of special interest is a group of performers, especially story tellers. A reddish brown earthenware figure from a cliff-side tomb in Xindu 新都, Sichuan is a fine example.³⁰ [Fig. 1.12].



Fig. 1.12 Story teller. Eastern Han dynasty. Earthenware. Height 48 cm. Excavated from a Han tomb in Xindu, Sichuan province. Xindu County Bureau of Cultural Relics.

In addition to painted earthenware, an important development of Han sculpture was the introduction of glazed earthenware — earthenware covered in a single layer of low-fired lead glaze — a technical innovation that was to endure. Large quantities of glazed ceramic vessels and objects have been excavated from numerous Han dynasty tombs in many regions in China. A Han tomb in Sijian'gou 泗澗溝, Jiyuan 濟源, Henan province, yielded several such pieces,

²⁹ In 2012, the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge organised an exhibition focusing on the treasures discovered in these Han royal tombs at Xuzhou. See James C. S. Lin ed., *The Search for Immortality: Tomb Treasures of Han China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

³⁰ Caroselli ed., *The Quest for Eternity*, 117.

including a group of brown-glazed earthenware figures of dancers and musicians [Fig. 1.13].³¹ Earthenware figures glazed in green had been also popular during the Han. This is therefore the beginning of a glaze figure tradition in China.



Fig. 1.13 Dancers and musicians. Western Han dynasty. Brown-glazed earthenware. Height 16.5 to 21.5 cm. Excavated from Tomb 8 at Sijian'gou in Jiyuan, Henan province. Henan Provincial Museum.

The Chinese burial customs that emerged at the beginning of the imperial period inspired developments in Chinese sculpture for millennia.³² A great number of sculptural works made exclusively for tombs have survived and archaeological excavations continue to bring many more figures and other funeral objects to light. The high degree of technical and artistic competence embodied in these tomb figures (especially examples from the third century BCE to the tenth century CE), together with their number and size, has made them a prime field for study in Chinese sculpture. Although representations of humans dominated the production of ceramic sculpture in earlier periods, during the Han a new type of image

³¹ Henansheng bowuguan 河南省博物館, "Jiyuan Sijian'gou sanzuo Han mu de fajue," 濟源泗澗溝三座漢墓的發掘 [Excavation of three Han tombs at Sijian'gou, Jiyuan], *WW* 2 (1973): 46-53.

³² For comprehensive discussions and illustrations of Chinese tomb sculptures, see Cao and Sun ed., *Zhongguo gudai yong*; Caroselli ed., *The Quest for Eternity*; Ann Paludan, *Chinese Tomb Figurines* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

appeared and evolved in parallel. Unlike all the figures discussed above, some Han dynasty figures in human form are clearly not ordinary human beings.

Religious Images in Ceramic Sculptures from the Eastern Han to the Tang

Eastern Han

The earliest religious ceramic images were produced during the second and early third centuries, primarily in southwestern China (in present-day Sichuan). The earthenware figure in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto is probably one of the oldest extant religious sculptures made of ceramic material [Fig. 1.14]. The deity



Fig. 1.14 Xiwangmu. Eastern Han dynasty. Earthenware. Height 44.5 cm. Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (ROM2005_3950_1).

is portrayed seated on a throne, guarded on each side by a dragon and a tiger in frontal posture, suggesting that the figure represents the Queen Mother of the

West or Xiwangmu 西王母. Although the goddess wears a simple cap instead of her characteristic *sheng* 聖 headdress, her pose with hands folded under her upper garment and more importantly the winged dragon and tiger at her sides leave little doubt on as to her identification as Xiwangmu.³³ The figure is 44.5 cm in height and ascribed to the Eastern Han period.

Xiwangmu is one of the first devotional icons to appear in China. The first references to the goddess are encountered on Shang oracle bone inscriptions where the name Ximu 西母, ‘Mother of the West’, appears.³⁴ In Eastern Zhou philosophical writings, Xiwangmu is described as timeless and deathless. During the Western Han period, Xiwangmu became a goddess who ruled over paradise, which was thought to be located on the magic mountain, Kunlun 崑崙山, far in the west. The goddess was fundamentally linked to beliefs concerning death and immortality. Toward the end of the Western Han, the cult of Xiwangmu took form, and the goddess was worshipped by all social levels both at the imperial court and among the populace. Evidence of the popularity of the Xiwangmu cult appears in several Han texts like the *Hanshu* 漢書 [Books of Han] and the *Yilin* 易林 [Forest

³³ Klass Ruitenbeek, *Chinese Shadows: Stone Reliefs, Rubbings, and Related Works of Art from the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD220) in the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 2002), 61. The *sheng* headdress, the short-feathered cap, is the most significant and constant attribute of Xiwangmu. The headdress is mentioned repeatedly in textual descriptions of the goddess from the Warring States and Han periods. The goddess’s throne is also an important iconographic marker. For a discussion of her guardians, the dragon and the tiger, see Suzanne Elizabeth Cahill, *Transcendence & Divine Passion: The Queen Mother of the West in Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 26.

³⁴ For early descriptions of Xiwangmu, see Cahill, *ibid.*, 11-65; Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979), 86-126; Riccardo Fracasso, “Holy Mothers of Ancient China: A New Approach to the Hsi-Wang-Mu Problem,” *T’oung Pao* 74 (1988):1-46.

of changes].³⁵ As the ruler of the western immortal land, her images frequently adorn tombs and offering shrines that are closely connected with ideas of the afterlife and paradise during the Han dynasty.³⁶ Representing and venerating Xiwamgnu in burial must have helped guide the deceased to Mount Kunlun, and introduce him to the world of immortals.³⁷ Although nothing specific is known about the provenance of this sculpture, it was in all probability made for placement in a tomb of a devotee of Xiwangmu and her western paradise. Indeed,



Fig. 1.15 Xiwangmu. Eastern Han dynasty. Earthenware. Height 28.3 cm.

³⁵ In these texts, she was also seen as a deity who is not only able to help people gain immortality in the afterlife, but also able to bless her followers on earth with wealth and children and to rescue them from worldly trouble. See Wu Hung, “Xiwangmu, the Queen Mother of the West,” *Oriental Art* 18 (April 1987): 29-30.

³⁶ Xiwangmu’s iconography first receives definitive form during the Han. The goddess’s image appears all over China across media. Regional variations in medium and iconography occur. For a detailed discussion and illustrations of the Xiwangmu cult and her images, see Wu, “Xiwangmu, the Queen Mother of the West,” 24-33; Jean M. James, “An Iconographic Study of Xiwangmu during the Han Dynasty,” *Artibus Asiae* 55, no. 1/2 (1995): 17-41; Li Song 李淞, *Lun Handai yishu zhong de Xiwangmu tuxiang* 論漢代藝術中的西王母圖像 [A study on the images of the Queen Mother of the West in Han dynasty art] (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000).

³⁷ Michèle Pirazzoli-t’Serstevens, “Death and the Dead: practices and Images in the Qin and Han,” in *Early Chinese Religion Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC-220 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden: Boston: Brill, 2009), 983.

two similar ceramic sculptures of Xiwangmu, dated to the Eastern Han, were excavated from Sichuan tombs. They are, nonetheless, not independent figures but oil lamps that take the shape of the goddess seated on the dragon-and-tiger throne supporting lamp cups.³⁸ Another similar yet more richly decorated version of the Toronto sculpture was previously in the collection of the Tsui Museum of Art in Hong Kong. This work might have originally served as an oil lamp as well, although lamp cups are missing [Fig. 1.15].

Funerary objects that depict Xiwangmu and her mythical paradise were especially numerous in Sichuan province during the Eastern Han, attesting to the popularity and spread of her cult and imagery in the southwest of China. Another notable representation of the goddess from Sichuan is a ceramic sculpture that was unearthed in 1978 in the vicinity of Chengdu 成都 [Fig. 1.16].³⁹ It depicts a journey in search of immortality. Men and women appear on three levels, climbing a column-like mountain, possibly Kunlun. At the end of their journey on the summit appears a female figure, perhaps Xiwangmu, who resides on the magic mountain. The sculpture originally served as the base of a bronze ‘money tree’ (*yaoqianshu* 搖錢樹).⁴⁰ Archaeological finds demonstrate that the distribution of money trees was limited to southwest China, notably Sichuan, where this type

³⁸ For illustrations, see Li, *Lun Handai yishu zhong de Xiwangmu tuxiang*, figs 111, 112.

³⁹ Wu, “From the Neolithic to the Han,” 94-7.

⁴⁰ The term ‘money tree’ derives from coin-shaped designs, representing wealth, that hang down as leaves from the branches. The term is nevertheless a later designation. Chen Xiandan has suggested that the origin of the money tree can be traced to the bronze ‘divine tree’ of the Sanxingdui 三星堆 culture, which flourished in Sichuan in the late Shang. Chen Xiandan, “On the Designation ‘Money Tree’,” *Orientalism* 28, no. 8 (1997): 67-71.

of funerary object enjoyed particular popularity during the Eastern Han period.⁴¹



Fig. 1.16 Money tree base. Eastern Han dynasty. Earthenware. Height 60.5 cm. Unearthed in the vicinity of Chengdu, Sichuan province. Chengdu Museum.

Because of their exquisite, fine openwork design, few bronze trees have survived intact. The image of Xiwangmu as a symbol of prosperity is often found at the apex or on the branches of extant money trees. In contrast, money tree bases survive in greater numbers and in a variety of sculptural forms. Most of them are from earthenware and depict images linked to Xiwangmu and her realm.⁴²

In some of the money tree bases discovered in Sichuan, one further feature is present. On a small ceramic base excavated from a cliff tomb at Pengshan 彭山, Sichuan, a sculpted image of Buddha is found [Fig. 1.17].⁴³ This work is arguably

⁴¹ Susan Erickson, a pioneer in the study of money trees, outlined the distribution of finds of money trees, see Susan Erickson, "Money Trees of the Eastern Han Dynasty," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 66 (1994): 7-41.

⁴² For illustrations, see Li, *Lun Handai yishu zhong de Xiwangmu tuxiang*, figs 107, 108.

⁴³ Nanjing bowuyuan 南京博物院, *Sichuan Pengshan Handai yamu* 四川彭山漢代崖墓 [Han dynasty cliff tombs at Pengshan, Sichuan] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1991), 37-8.

one of the best-known examples of early Buddha or Buddha-like images and has sparked great interest among scholars over the past decades. On the front of the base are three carved figures. The Buddha-like figure sits with legs crossed under a robe with heavy, parallel U-shaped folds and his hair is piled atop his head, possibly depicting the *ushnisha*, a mark of the consummate wisdom of the Buddha, symbolising his enlightened nature. The right hand is raised, apparently in the *abhaya mudra*, the gesture of fearlessness, and the left hand, somewhat damaged, is probably grasping the end of the drapery. All these features are fashioned after Buddha images created in Mathura and Gandhara during the Kushan period (late first to third century CE). Two standing figures, likely attendants, flank either side of the Buddha-like figure.



Fig. 1.17 Base of a money tree. Eastern Han dynasty. Clay. Height 21 cm. From a Han tomb at Pengshan, Sichuan province. Nanjing Museum.

The earliest references to Buddhism in Chinese sources reveal that Buddhist practices were performed in the Han court circles.⁴⁴ The beginning of a Buddhist community in China is marked by the arrival of the Parthian missionary and translator An Shigao 安世高 (d. circa 168 CE) at Luoyang 洛陽 in present-day Henan province in 148 CE. Despite the flourishing court-centred Buddhism at Luoyang, it is interesting that the earliest representations of Buddhist figures, dating from the late second and early third centuries CE, emerged in the present-day provinces of Sichuan and southern Shaanxi, a region that grew into a major centre of the Xiwangmu cult in the Eastern Han. These images are found almost exclusively in tombs as part of the tomb's interior decoration or among money trees buried with the deceased. It is unclear whether these Buddhist representations were actual devotional icons or merely exotic motifs that were valued for their auspiciousness and were used as decorations of indigenous funerary objects. Interestingly, in some of these objects, representations of Buddha and images of Xiwangmu coexist. For instance, a money tree in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco shows the mingling of images of the two deities [Fig. 1.18]. In this example, an image of Xiwangmu is seated on a throne supported by a dragon and a tiger at the top of the tree and further down is a small figure of a seated Buddha. It is likely that the Buddha, who came from the west, was considered just another immortal or sage, and was integrated into the paradise of Xiwangmu.⁴⁵ Buddhist elements found in Chinese mortuary contexts

⁴⁴ Erik Zürcher, "Han Buddhism and the Western Region," in *Thought and Law in Qin and Han China*, ed. Wilt L. Idema (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), 159-62.

⁴⁵ Wu, "Xiwangmu, the Queen Mother of the West," 33; Ruitenbeek, *Chinese Shadows*, 21.

frequently seem unrelated to the religious thought and practice of Buddhism during the period when the Buddha-like image was created.



Fig. 1.18 Part of a money tree. Eastern Han dynasty. Bronze.
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (1995.79.a-dd).

Many scholars consider Xiwangmu an early Daoist goddess. Wu Hung proposed that all the cliff tombs and the objects found inside, like money trees, were related to a regional Daoist movement, which is known as the ‘Way of the Five Pecks of Rice’ (Wudoumi Dao 五斗米道) or the ‘Way of the Celestial Masters’ (Tianshi Dao 天師道), primarily centred in Sichuan in the late second and the early third century CE.⁴⁶ He further argued that Xiwangmu (and Buddha) images in southwest China have exclusively been found in the core area of

⁴⁶ Wu Hung, “Mapping Early Taoist Art,” in *Taoism and the Arts of China*, ed. Stephen Little and Shawn Eichman (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 88-91. Five Pecks of Rice Daoism (Wudoumi Dao) or Celestial Masters Daoism (Tianshi Dao) is regarded as the beginning of the Orthodox Daoist Church, which was the dominant Daoist sect to appear during the Eastern Han in southwest China. Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (34-156) was the founder or the first patriarch of this religious tradition.

Wudoumi Dao.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, as Stephen Little pointed out, there is scant evidence that Xiwangmu was worshipped by Wudoumi Dao followers during the Han period.⁴⁸ Xiwangmu is not mentioned in any religious Daoist text before the Six Dynasties period; this makes it difficult to characterise the cult of Xiwangmu during the Han dynasty as part of early religious Daoism. There is also no concrete evidence to firmly associate the use of early Buddhist imagery with religious Daoism either.⁴⁹ Regardless of the function and interpretation of Buddhist religious imagery in mortuary contexts, it is clear that the Pengshan ceramic base incorporates a Buddha-like image into a tomb object associated with an existing Han funerary cult in local Sichuan, which is outside the domain of religious Daoism and Buddhism.

Three Kingdoms and Western Jin

Early ceramic Buddhist images also appear in the southeast of China during the Three Kingdoms 三國 (220-280) and Western Jin 西晉 (265-316) periods that followed the demise of the Han dynasty also as part of a wider decorative scheme, rather than freestanding figures. During this time, the use of such images was prolific in the lower Yangzi River valley, primarily in the Hubei, Jiangsu and Zhejiang regions within the Wu 吳 territory of the Three Kingdoms. Buddhist

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Stephen Little, "Taoism and the Arts of China," in *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 17.

⁴⁹ Stanley Abe, *Ordinary Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 49.

images were incorporated into the decoration of a variety of funerary objects, including jars, incense burners, bowls and pots.⁵⁰ Figures of the Buddha appearing on these ceramic wares are discreetly placed at wide intervals, often on a decorative band on the shoulder of the vessel. One of the most spectacular examples is a lidded jar that was unearthed from a tomb datable to the end of the Wu Kingdom or to the early Western Jin in Nanjing 南京 in 1983 [Fig. 1.19].⁵¹



Fig. 1.19 Lidded jar. Three Kingdoms or Western Jin dynasty. Early Yue ware. Height 32.1 cm. Excavated at Yuhuataixiang, Nanjing, Jiangsu province. Nanjing City Museum.

The vessel has two elaborate seated Buddha figures on either side of the shoulder.⁵² Each figure has an *ushnisha* and a round halo, with the hands placed one above the other on the laps, palms up in a gesture known as *dhyana mudra* (or

⁵⁰ For illustrations, see He Yun'ao 賀雲翱 et al., *Fojiao chuchuan nanfang zhilu* 佛教初傳南方之路 [The early route by which Buddhism first reached south] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1993).

⁵¹ Yi Jiasheng 易家胜, "Nanjing chutude Liuchao zaoqi qingci youxiacai pankouhu," 南京出土的六朝早期青瓷釉下彩盘口壺 [Early Six Dynasties celadon ewer with dish-shaped mouth in underglaze painted decoration excavated from Nanjing], *WW* 6 (1988): 72-5.

⁵² The underglaze iron brown decoration on the vessel is believed to be a portrayal of the land of the immortals. See *ibid.* Similar to the aforementioned money tree, Buddhist images and native Chinese deity figures are shown together here.

meditation) and the legs crossed on a lotus-petal throne that is flanked by small lions. The jar seems to have been made for funerary purposes, but its exact function is as yet unknown.⁵³

Among the ceramic vessels with Buddha figures from the southeast, a jar-type object known as *gucangguan* 谷藏罐 (granary jar), *duisuguan* 堆塑罐 (figured jar) or *shentinghu* 神亭壺 (spirit pavilion vase), also commonly referred to as a *hunping* 魂瓶 (urn of the soul), is perhaps most prominent and demonstrates distinctive regional features. Among the many excavated tombs from the Wu and Western Jin periods in the lower Yangzi region, only a small number from a limited area of the present southern Jiangsu and northern Zhejiang has yielded funerary urns embellished with Buddhist imagery. One representative example is a green-glazed ‘Early Yue’ 先越 ware urn, which is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art [Fig. 1.20].⁵⁴ The funerary urn is composed of three sections. The upper level has a three-storey superstructure, under which human figures and various animals are placed. A row of separately moulded Buddha figures, sitting in a meditative posture on lion thrones with lotus petals, encircles the middle level along the upper and lower rims of the main body. In the lower section, human and animal images are intermittently attached to the shoulder of the body and are used to offset the sculptural assemblages that adorn the upper

⁵³ James Watt ed., *China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200-750 AD* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 201.

⁵⁴ The name Yue 越 was first applied in the Tang dynasty to products of the Yue kilns in northern Zhejiang province. However, since celadon wares were produced in those sites prior to the Tang, it has been suggested that these wares made from the Han through the Sui can be called Early Yue wares to distinguish them from Yue wares produced in the same area during the Tang and Song periods. See Ren Shilong 任世龍 and Xie Chunlong 謝純龍 ed., *Yueyao ci jianding yu jianshang* 越窯瓷鑑定與鑑賞 [Yue ware: authentication and appreciation] (Nanchang: Jiangxi meishu chubanshe, 2002), 1-5.

section.



Fig. 1.20 Funerary urn (*hunping*). Western Jin dynasty. Early Yue ware. Height 45.4 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art (1992.165.21).

Many scholars have studied these intriguing tomb objects and speculated on their function and meanings, as indicated by their many different names. One possibility is that the urns were used in soul-summoning burials to provide a portal through which the soul of the deceased could return to the tomb.⁵⁵ As for the Buddha figures decorating these ceramic vessels, their definitive purpose has not yet been established, similar to the aforementioned Nanjing lidded jar. It has been observed that Western Jin urns show more elaboration, with layers of buildings mounted up, an expanded variety of figures and more images of the Buddha. The applied décor of Buddhist figures, frequently found on these later examples, has been interpreted as reflecting the growing popularity of

⁵⁵ Wai-Kam Ho, "Hun-p'ing: The Urn of the Soul," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 48, no. 2 (1961): 26-34.

Buddhism.⁵⁶ Some scholars believe that the urns with motifs of seated Buddhas, when placed in tombs, possibly represent the Pure Land belief so that the Buddhas could guide the soul of the deceased to be reborn in Amitabha's western paradise, Sukhavati, known as 'the Pure Land'.⁵⁷ The owners of these vessels may have been Buddhists who maintained a belief in the Pure Land of the Buddha Amitabha. Nonetheless, the prevalence of Pure Land texts and beliefs at that time in this region is not clear.⁵⁸ It seems more likely that the Buddha figure was appropriated into indigenous mortuary practices and used as an apotropaic motif on funerary objects such as *hunping*, to protect and appease the soul.

Significantly, ceramic Buddhist figures that were probably used as independent objects were created around the time of the production of funerary urns with small seated Buddhas. A glazed ceramic Buddha-like figure was excavated in 1992 from a passageway in a tomb in the capital of the Wu Kingdom, Ezhou 鄂州 in Hubei province [Fig. 1.21].⁵⁹ This figure is thought to have been made in the second half of the third century and is of interest because it

⁵⁶ Albert Dien, "Developments in Funerary Practices in the Six Dynasties Period: The Duisuguan 堆塑罐 or 'Figured jar' as a Case in Point," in *Between Han and Tang: Cultural and Artistic Interaction in a Transformative Period*, ed. Wu Hung (Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 2001), 529.

⁵⁷ Wu Hung, "Early Buddhist Elements in Chinese Art," *Artibus Asiae* 47, no. 3/4 (1986): 289-90.

⁵⁸ Marilyn M. Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia, Vol.1: Later Han, Three Kingdoms and Western Chin in China and Bactria to Shan-shan in Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 119; Abe, *Ordinary Images*, 97-9. Albert Dien also hesitates in accepting this hypothesis, for in Pure Land the spirit is taken immediately to the paradise, and therefore, the need for an intermediate domicile is perhaps superfluous. Dien, "Developments in Funerary Practices in the Six Dynasties Period," 530.

⁵⁹ Hubeisheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 湖北省文物考古研究所 and Erzhoushi bowuguan 鄂州市博物館, "Hubei Ezhou Shi Tangjietou Liuchao mu," 湖北鄂州市塘角頭六朝墓 [The Six Dynasties tomb of Tangjiaotou, Ezhou city of Hubei], *KG* 11 (1996): 1-27. For further remarks on Buddhist figures in tombs, see Yang Hong 杨泓, "Ba Ezhou Sun Wu mu chutu taofoxiang," 跋鄂州孫吳墓出土陶佛像 [A clay Buddha image from the tomb of Sun Wu at Ezhou, a postscript], *KG* 11 (1996): 28-30.

stands 20.6 cm high, which makes it an unusually large-scale work for this period.



Fig. 1.21 Buddha-like figure. Early Yue ware. Height 20.6 cm. Excavated from a Six Dynasties tomb, Tangjue, Erzhou, Hebei province.

The seated figure is somewhat damaged but still maintains characteristics of Buddha images commonly found on funerary urns. Stanley Abe has studied this sculpture and suggested that, considering the position of the figure in the tomb, it may have served a special function as guard of the deceased. As opposed to the Yang Hong's opinion, Abe has further argued that no evidence supports the notion that the image was used by the deceased as an object of religious devotion.⁶⁰ However, it is undeniable that this is the earliest ceramic example of an independent, freestanding Buddha figure recorded so far, perhaps closely related to the standard form of the devotional icon, rather than an element on a funerary object.

⁶⁰ Abe, *Ordinary Images*, 55.

Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui and Tang

Existing evidence shows that the first Chinese Buddha images that clearly served as objects of devotion were made of bronze. The earliest known dated example of the Buddha, a gilt-bronze seated Shakyamuni (40 cm high) is inscribed Later Zhao 後趙, Jianwu fourth year (338), and is currently in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco [Fig. 1.22]. With Buddhist devotion increasingly growing, such



Fig 1.22 Buddha. Later Zhao dynasty, dated 338. Gilt bronze. Height 40 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B600B1034).

images began to be made in great numbers in China during the Northern and Southern Dynasties 南北朝 (386-589). Many of these early gilt bronze images are dated and their donors mentioned by name. Unlike numerous small gilt-bronze figures that survive today, ceramic figures are scarcely known from this period but extant examples suggest that they had been produced continuously.

A small figure (22.5 cm tall), dated Northern Qi 北齊 563, is one of the oldest known examples of ceramic Buddhist sculpture and is presently in the Museum of East Asian Art, Bath [Fig. 1.23].⁶¹ The figure represents the



Fig. 1.23 Avalokiteshvara (Guanyin). Northern Qi dynasty, dated 563. Buff pottery. Height 22.5 cm. Museum of East Asian Art, Bath.

bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara (Guanyin 觀音 or also known as Guanshiyin 觀世音), standing on an inverted lotus pedestal over a square base. The bodhisattva holds a stalk (of probably a lotus or a willow), while the left hand holds a jewel-like object. The head is backed by a pointed mandorla and wears an elaborate crown.⁶² A long crossed necklace of elongated beads is suspended from the neck

⁶¹ Brian Shane McElney, *The Museum of East Asian Art Inaugural Exhibition: Chinese Ceramics, Vol. 1* (Bath: Museum of East Asian Art, 1993), 59.

⁶² Unlike the later iconographic standard for Guanyin, this image does not carry an effigy of Amitabha on the head crown, which became the most distinctive attribute of this bodhisattva. According to Dorothy C. Wong, it was only toward the end of the sixth century that the iconography for Chinese Guanyin images became established. Dorothy C. Wong, "Guanyin Images in Medieval China, 5th-8th Centuries," in *Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara (Guanyin) and Modern Society* ed. William Magge and Yi-hsun Huang (Taipei: Fagu wenhua shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 2007), 260.

of the bodhisattva. On the back of the figure there is a dedicatory inscription written in black ink.

Guanyin, the embodiment of compassion, is probably the most popular and revered bodhisattva in China, occupying a unique place within the Mahayana Buddhist pantheon. Guanyin appeared early in many Mahayana scriptures translated into Chinese from the second century CE onward.⁶³ One key reason for the increasing importance of Guanyin as the focus of personal devotion was the widespread popularity of the Lotus Sutra (*Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮花經, shortened to *Fahua jing* 法花經), in particular the Universal Gate Chapter (*Pumen pin* 普門品) of the Lotus Sutra, devoted to the praise of this bodhisattva. This chapter, commonly known as the Guanshiyin Sutra (*Guanshiyin jing* 觀世音經), started to circulate as an independent scripture before the fifth century and played a seminal role in the dissemination of Guanyin worship in China.⁶⁴ The text describes the bodhisattva as a compassionate saviour deity who can help save all sentient beings from various sorts of sufferings and difficulties in their lives. It is most likely the bodhisattva's miraculous powers that led devotees to venerate him and create his images.⁶⁵

⁶³ Chün-fang Yü discussed the major scriptural sources associated with the cult of Guanyin in her comprehensive study of Guanyin in China, see Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 31-91.

⁶⁴ Li Yumin 李玉民, "Nanbeichao Guanshiyin zaoxiang kao," 南北朝觀世音造像考 [A study on the Guanyin images of the Northern and Southern Dynasties], in *Zhongshiji yiqian de diyu wenhua, zongjiao yu yishu*, 中世紀以前的地域文化, 宗教與藝術 [Regional culture, religion and art before the medieval period], ed. Xing Yitian 刑义田 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 2002), 244.

⁶⁵ Hou Xudong, "The Buddhist Pantheon," in *Early Chinese Religion: Period of Division (220-589 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1127-28.

In contrast to scripture sources, the earliest visual evidence of the worship of Guanyin as a personal devotional deity in China dates only from the mid-fifth century. The early Guanyin images are small and made of gilt bronze. A lotus-bearer Guanyin, manufactured in Hebei and now in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. is one of the earliest such bronzes (F1909.266). It is 23 cm high and dated to 453, during the Northern Wei 北魏 period. Numerous gilt bronze independent images of Guanyin have survived from the late fifth and sixth centuries, indicating the growing popularity of this bodhisattva among devotees. According to Li Yumin, Guanyin images made of bronze or stone from the Northern and Southern Dynasties are small (around 20 cm high) and most of those who dedicated these images were individuals.⁶⁶ Such small figures probably functioned as personal devotional images.

The Bath Guanyin, made of ceramic, was probably a substitute for more expensive bronze. Whereas other ceramic images of Buddhas and other bodhisattvas are absent, several Guanyin images survive to this day, attesting to the flourishing cult devoted to this bodhisattva by the sixth century. Ceramic figures from the Northern Dynasties, with virtually identical forms to the Bath Guanyin, were excavated in 1976 at Boxing 博興, Shandong.⁶⁷ A similar but large-scale stone sculpture of the bodhisattva, which may have served as a model for these small ceramic figures, was also found there. Ceramic Guanyin icons of this type appear to have been sought-after for long in the northeast of China. An

⁶⁶ Li, "Nanbeichao Guanshiyin zaixiang kao," 235-331.

⁶⁷ Chang Xuzheng 常紱政 and Li Shaonan 李少南, "Shandongsheng Boxingxian chutu i Beichao zaixiang," 山東省博興縣出土一北朝造像 [Buddhist figures of the Northern Dynasties at Boxing county, Shandong province], *WW* 7 (1983), 38-44, pl. 5.

example from the Sui 隋 dynasty (581-618), dated by inscription to the year 603, exhibits the same form and style found in the earlier bodhisattva figures from the Northern Dynasties, pointing to the enduring popularity of the cult and the small ceramic images of Guanyin in that region.⁶⁸ The fact that some of these figures bear dedicatory inscriptions further suggests that they were specially-commissioned works by individuals as objects of personal devotion.

The short-lived Sui dynasty unified the country after four centuries of division between rival regimes. Particularly worthy of mention from this period is a pair of clay figures of Buddhist monks that was unearthed from the tomb of Zhang Sheng 张盛, dated 595, in Anyang, Henan [Fig. 1.24].⁶⁹ Interestingly, these



Fig. 1.24 Monks. Sui dynasty. Earthenware. Unearthed from the tomb of Zhang Sheng, dated 595. Height 16.5 cm (left) and 24 cm (right). Henan Museum.

⁶⁸ Matsubara Saburō 松原三郎, *Chūgoku bukkyō chōkoku shiron* 中国仏教彫刻史論 [History of Chinese Buddhist sculpture] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1995), pl. 571.

⁶⁹ Kaogu yanjiusuo Anyang fajuedui 考古研究所安陽發掘隊, “Anyang Sui Zhang Sheng mu fajue ji,” 安陽隨張盛墓發掘記 [The Excavation of the Zhang Sheng tomb from the Sui dynasty in Anyang], *KG* 10 (1959): 541-45.

two figures were found at the burial together with numerous ceramic figures of humans that were made exclusively for use as tomb furnishings. Several are finely glazed (some are even high-fired), while the monks are simply made of earthenware and unglazed. It is not clear why such images of superior beings appear in a burial context — and why they are unglazed. It seems very unlikely that these figures were used as objects of veneration before burial. Albert Dien proposed that they represent Buddhist monks who were attached to the household of the deceased and that the deceased would face them in another realm, and not in the tomb.⁷⁰ They are probably interrogators rather than religious teachers.

During the succeeding Tang 唐 dynasty (618-907), the production of ceramic religious figures appears to have developed considerably and to have spread into many parts of China. The two most prominent production centres of Buddhist figures from this period were located in the southwest. The Qiong 邛 kiln, in Qionglai 邛崃 near Chengdu, Sichuan, was a famous kiln complex throughout Tang times. A handful of small figures of the Buddha, mostly with lustrous green glazes, were discovered at the kiln site [Fig. 1.25].⁷¹ The sizes of these images are very small, between 7 and 12 cm in height. At the same time, further south, another kiln flourished in Guizhou 貴州, in the vicinity of Guilin 桂林, Guangxi. In 1988, an interesting group of Buddhist sculptures, including 18

⁷⁰ Albert Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 228, note 115.

⁷¹ Geng Baochang 耿寶昌 ed., *Qiongyao gutaoci yanjiu* 邛窯古陶瓷研究 [Research on ancient Qiong ware] (Hefei: Zhongguo kexue jishu daxue chubanshe, 2002).

figures of the Buddha and 48 figures of monks, were unearthed from kiln site No.

3.⁷² Among these, three were found intact [Fig. 1.26].



Fig. 1.25 (left) Monk. Tang dynasty Qiong ware.

Fig. 1.26 (right) Monk. Tang dynasty. Guizhou ware.

In addition to the kiln sites, ceramic Buddhist icons have been found at the ruins of Tang dynasty temples. For instance, two fragments of a Tang three-colour or *sancai* 三彩 — polychrome lead glazed earthenware — sculpture were unearthed at the site of Qinglong Temple 青龍寺 located in a suburb of Xi'an.⁷³ The excavators have noted that these fragments likely came from a sitting Buddha figure. The glaze colours used for the *sancai* figure were black, green and blue. No further information was given, not even the size of the shards. Nonetheless, judging from the picture reproduced in the excavation report, the original sculpture would have been small in size. Although only fragments were

⁷² Guilin bowuguan 桂林博物館, “Guangxi Guizhouyao yizhi,” 廣西貴州窯遺址 [Guizhou kiln site in Guangxi province], *KGXB* 4 (1994): 516.

⁷³ Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogusuo Xi'an Tang chengdui 中國社會科學院考古所西安唐城隊, “Tang Chang'an Qinglongsi yizhi,” 唐長安青龍寺遺址 [The Qinglong temple in Tang Dynasty Chang'an], *KGXB* 2 (1989): 257.

discovered, they provide valuable evidence on the use of ceramic Buddhist figures in temples during the Tang period.

Perhaps the most important extant ceramic Buddhist sculptures of the Tang dynasty are a group of *sancai* figures of 'Heavenly Kings' (*tianwang* 天王; *lokapala* in Sanskrit), Protectors of the Buddhist Law, whose images are usually seen at the entrance to temples. These *sancai* Heavenly Kings have exclusively been found in high-status tombs from this time. One significant example is a pair of guardian figures in the British Museum that reputedly came from the tomb of Tang general Liu Tingxun 劉挺荀, datable by inscription to 728 [Fig. 1.27].⁷⁴ The



Fig. 1.27 Heavenly Kings (*tianwang*). Tang dynasty. Earthenware with *sancai* glaze. Excavated from the tomb of Liu Tingxun, dated 728. British Museum (OA 1936.10-12.220-9).

two fierce guardians are entirely human in shape, wear elaborate armour, and stand on animals or demons. The heads are unglazed while the remaining parts of the figures are completely covered with three-colour (*sancai*) lead glazes: amber-

⁷⁴ The memorial tablet found with these figures records that Liu died at the age of 72. Shelagh Vainker, *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain* (London: British Museum Press, 1991), 78.

yellow, green and brown. They were made as part of a large group of twelve figures of humans and animals that were buried to serve and protect the deceased in the afterlife.⁷⁵ Scholars believe that they are more evolved forms of the tomb guardian figures that existed during the Six Dynasties period, yet they were clearly influenced by contemporaneous depictions of Heavenly Kings in temples.⁷⁶ These guardian figures were probably intended to ward off evil demons in tombs similar to their mission as protecting spirits in Buddhism.

Even though only a handful of ceramic figures of religious images have been found intact from the Tang period, it is significant that they were unearthed in various places, including kiln sites, temples and tombs. This suggests that by Tang times the manufacture and use of ceramic religious icons had become more widespread and popular than in the preceding periods. Nonetheless, compared with sculpted works made of bronze or stone that have survived in abundance from the period, ceramic examples are scarce and lack variety and quality; hence, they have been almost excluded from the study of Chinese religious sculpture. However, the Liao-Northern Song period that succeeded the Tang marked a turning point in the development of ceramic sculpture production in China, in particular that of religious images. As will be discussed in the next section, the

⁷⁵ Apart from the pair of guardians, the British Museum group comprises pairs of horses and camels, each with grooms; officials, one military, one civil; and earth spirits. The set of twelve figures represents the standard 'core group' of the largest and most important objects reserved for burial with those of high rank during the Tang dynasty.

⁷⁶ Several sculptures of *tianwang* are found in Dunhuang 敦煌. Perhaps the best known Tang dynasty image of this Buddhist guardian deity is the monumental stone sculpture at the Fengxian Temple 奉先寺, dated 675, at Longmen 龍門, Henan. For illustration, see Howard et al., *Chinese Sculpture*, fig. 3.107.

production of various types, forms and sizes of religious figures began, and these were being used in a wider variety of contexts throughout China.

Religious Ceramic Sculptures from the Liao and the Northern Song

The North

The Liao 遼 dynasty (907-1125) was founded by a semi-nomadic people called Qidan 契丹 (or Khitan). They controlled much of north China in Liaoning province and parts of present-day Inner Mongolia and Hebei, and ruled contemporaneously with the Northern Song 北宋 dynasty (960-1127). Extant ceramic sculptures of the era show close ties to Tang sculptural tradition in *sancai* style. The 1983 discovery of a kiln producing *sancai* glazed ceramics at Longquanwu 龍泉霧, near Mentougou 門頭溝, in the western suburbs of Beijing and the site's subsequent excavation in 1985, have yielded three Buddhist sculptures.⁷⁷ A painted ceramic Buddha (79 cm high) and two bodhisattvas covered in *sancai* glaze were unearthed at the site, one measuring 51 cm high and the other 32 cm high [Figs 1.28, 1.29 and 1.30]. It is unclear which bodhisattvas each figure represent as the heads and hands which may have aided their identification are damaged. But through comparison with similar figures, it can be

⁷⁷ Zhao Guanglin 趙光林, "Jinnian Beijing diqu faxian de jichu gudai liuli yaozhi," 今年北京地區發現的幾處古代琉璃窯址 [Several ancient *liuli* kiln sites recently discovered in Beijing municipality] *KG* 7 (1986): 628-31.



Fig. 1.28 (left) Buddha. Liao dynasty. White ceramic with painted red robe. Height 79 cm.
 Fig. 1.29 (centre) Bodhisattva. Liao dynasty. Stoneware with *sancai* glaze. Height 51 cm.
 Fig. 1.30 (right) Bodhisattva. Liao dynasty. Stoneware with *sancai* glaze. Height 32 cm.
 From the Longquanwu kiln site in the Mentougou District of Beijing.

surmised that they might be representations of Guanyin.⁷⁸ After extensive excavations at the Longquanwu kiln site, Chinese archaeologists have concluded that *sancai* lead glazed wares began to be made there in the middle of the Liao dynasty, although in small quantities, and they have attributed the excavated *sancai* Buddhist sculptures to the late Liao period, between 1065 and 1125.⁷⁹ It is uncertain where these fairly large figures (one-third to one-half life-size) were destined for. They may not have been the focus of private devotion, but were possibly intended for temple altars.

⁷⁸ For example, see Pauline Lunsingh Sheurleer et al., *Asiatic Art in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff/Landshoff, 1985), 190. Also see Shoudu bowuguan 首都博物館, *Fojiao cibe nishen: Zhongguo gudai Guanyin pusa*. 佛教慈悲女神：中國古代觀音菩薩 [The Goddess of Mercy in Buddhism: The Avalokiteshvara bodhisattva in China:] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008), fig. 32.

⁷⁹ Beijingshi wenwu yanjiusuo 北京市文物研究所, *Beijing Longquanwuyao fajue baogao* 北京龍泉霧窯發掘報告 [Excavations of the Longquanwu kiln site in Beijing] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2002), 412-14.

Large-scale temple sculptures that formed part of public buildings appear to have been well-established by the Liao period. The manufacture of such figures is perhaps best exemplified by a well-published but now-dispersed group of *arhats* or *luohans* 羅漢 [Fig. 1.31]. These life-size stoneware sculptures with

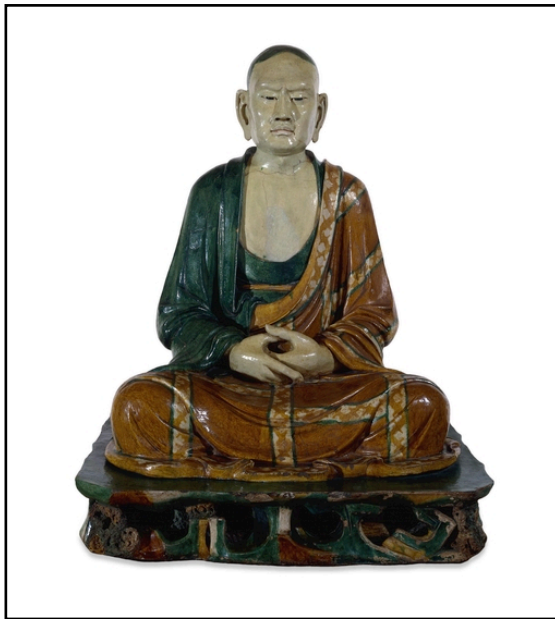


Fig. 1.31 *Arhat (luohan)*. Liao dynasty. Stoneware with *sancai* glaze. Height 130 cm. From Yixian, Hebei province. British Museum (1913.1221.1).

sancai glaze purportedly came from a cliff temple southwest of Beijing at Yixian 易縣 (once known as Yizhou 易州), Hebei.⁸⁰ At least ten surviving examples of this set are now kept in various museums across Europe, North America and Japan.⁸¹ The *luohans* are similar in size, roughly 120 cm in height including the

⁸⁰ For a summary of the discovery of the Yixian group, see Richard Smithies, “The Search for the Lohans of I-chou (Yixian),” *Oriental Art* 30 (Autumn 1984): 260-74.

⁸¹ Two examples are held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and one each at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia; the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; the British Museum, London; the Musée Guimet, Paris; and the Sezon Museum of Modern Art, Nagano. Another one, once in the private Fuld Collection in Germany, which was housed in the Ethnological Museum in Berlin, was long believed to have been destroyed during World War II but it is now located in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. Additionally, three were reportedly destroyed during their removal from the caves in the early twentieth century.

base, and are represented as monks, dressed in loose monk robes (*kasayas*) and with shaved heads, each sitting on a plinth with a perforated front.

From the time of the sculptures' discovery in the early twentieth century, the Yixian *luohans* have interested scholars for their realistic portraiture as well as the use of sophisticated construction techniques which are almost unparalleled in Chinese sculpture. Each of these life-sized, glazed stoneware figures has individualised features, as if they were portraits of specific people. There had been no previous tradition of such monumental ceramic religious sculptures, although the traditions of life-size human sculptures go back as far as the terracotta army from the Qin dynasty. The *luohan* figures, considered masterpieces of Chinese sculpture, have also been the subject of much controversy. A great deal of research has been done on these Buddhist sculptures over the last few decades, but there is disagreement among scholars who have studied them as to when and where they were made.

Even though these debates are still open, the discovery of the Longquanwu kiln and the *sancai* Buddhist sculptures has provided much useful information about the *luohans* from Yixian. It is unclear whether the *luohans* were Longquanwu products, but the excavated sculptures from Longquanwu do suggest that by the late Liao era, the manufacture of large *sancai* Buddhist images may have been well-established in Longquanwu and possibly in other kiln complexes of the Liao dynasty in north China.⁸² This can be further supported by the recent

⁸² Some scholars believe that the *luohan* figures must have been produced at Longquanwu. For example, see Marilyn Gridley, "Three Buddhist Sculptures from Longquanwu and the Luohans from Yi Xian," *Oriental Art* 41 (Winter 1995-96): 20-9.

thermoluminescence testing on the University of Pennsylvania Museum *luohan*, which confirmed with an eleventh- to twelfth-century date.⁸³

Furthermore, it is uncertain how many figures constituted the original group of *luohans*. The usual assumption is that the Yixian *luohans* might have initially numbered sixteen or eighteen. In China, *luohans* have served as important objects of cultic worship since the Tang dynasty. Especially important was the cult of sixteen *luohans*. They supposedly represent sixteen eminent disciples of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, whom the Buddha entrusted to remain in this world and not to enter *nirvana* (spiritual enlightenment) in order to preserve the Buddhist teachings until the coming of the Buddha of the Future, Maitreya. From around the tenth century onward, *luohans* were increasingly shown in groups of sixteen (later enlarged to eighteen and even five hundred) along the side walls of a temple hall, attracting pilgrims and local worshippers.⁸⁴ The fact that at least ten *luohan* figures from the set left China in the early twentieth century strongly suggests that they initially formed part of a regular sixteen or eighteen *luohan* group. Another intriguing point about the *luohan* group is its provenance. Although the sculptures were discovered in a mountain cave, the set was unlikely to have been commissioned for this site. Instead, they appear to have originally come from elsewhere, but they had later been deposited in the cave, perhaps for safekeeping. The *luohan* sculptures would probably have been arranged on platforms against the walls of a temple or monastery hall near Yixian.

⁸³ Richard Smithies, "A Luohan from Yizhou in the University of Pennsylvania Museum," *Oriental Art* 32, no. 2 (2001): 51-6.

⁸⁴ *Luohans* in groups of eighteen and five hundred were developed in Chinese Buddhism without a canonical basis.

Many questions remain to be answered regarding the Yixian *luohans*, but it is evident that this type of large-scale religious figure, especially with the version of *sancai* glazes that was popular during the Liao dynasty, set the tone for the production of ceramic sculpture for temple use in later periods. Numerous monumental figures, which probably were once enshrined in temples throughout China, survive in museum collections around the world, testifying to an enduring Chinese tradition of temple sculptures. Many such examples are dated to the Ming 明 dynasty (1368-1644), when the Liao sculptural tradition was revived. The British Museum houses some of the most notable large-scale Ming ceramic sculptures.⁸⁵ Of special interest is the life-sized seated figure of Budai heshang 布袋和尚, dated 1484, commonly known as ‘The Laughing Buddha’ [Fig. 1.32].⁸⁶

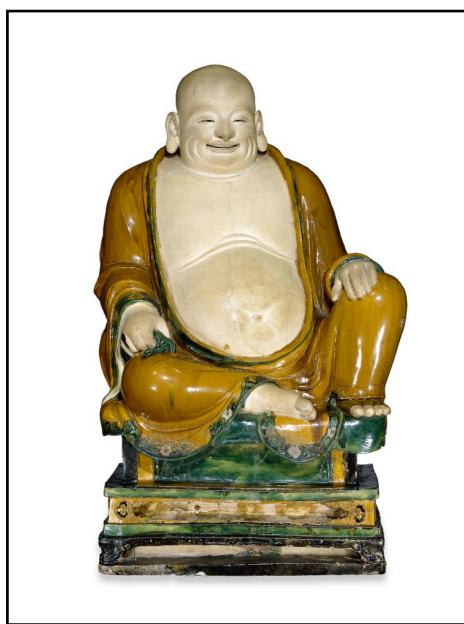


Fig. 1.32 Budai. Ming dynasty, dated 1486. Stoneware with *sancai* glaze. Height 119.2 cm. From Henan province. British Museum (OA 1937.1-13.1).

⁸⁵ Jessica Harrison-Hall, “Large Ceramic Figures 1368-1644,” in *Catalogue of Late Yuan and Ming Ceramics in the British Museum* (London: British Museum Press, 2001), 537-43.

⁸⁶ Budai heshang will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

The pedestal, which is integral to the sculpture, has a dedicatory inscription giving details about the date of manufacture, the names of the donors and the maker as well as the priest who requested contributions for the production of the figure.⁸⁷ This suggests that such sculptures were specially commissioned pieces and were typically offered by one or more faithful Buddhists who paid for their manufacture for temples.

Along with the ceramic sculptures used in temples, the production of small religious sculptures continued in parallel during the Liao and Northern Song periods. Perhaps the most notable examples of this kind from the north are two white glazed monk figures found with a headless Buddha in 1980 at Qiuwulibuge, Nailingao Township, Kunlun Banner of Inner Mongolia within the Liao dynasty territory [Figs 1.33 and 1.34].⁸⁸ Both monks, one youthful and the other elderly, are seated with legs pendent on rocky thrones. Each figure is individually modelled with a life-like face, like the Yixian *luohans*. Monks in a pair flanking a Buddha are generally understood as representations of Ananda (Anan 阿難) and Kashyapa (Jiaye 家葉), two of the principal disciples of the historical Buddha,

⁸⁷ For the incised inscription and English translation, see Harrision-Hall, *ibid.*, 539-40. Three other figures stylistically similar to the British Museum's Budai figure and with similar inscriptions dated 1484 are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the Burrell Collection, Glasgow and the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool. They probably belong to a larger group of Buddhist figures from the same unknown Chinese temple. For a detailed discussion of these four figures, see Nick Pearce, "A Group of Chinese Stoneware Buddhist Sculptures Reunited," *TOCS* 58 (1993-1994), 37-50.

⁸⁸ Shao Qinglong 邵清隆, "Liaodai baici foxiang," 遼代白瓷佛像 [Liao-dynasty white ware Buddhist images], *Neimenggu wenwu kaogu* 內蒙古文物考古 1 (1981): 143-44. These figures appear to have been made at Chifeng 赤峰, Inner Mongolia, where such white glazed wares were the main products during the Liao period. Shen Hsueh-man ed., *Gilded Splendor: Treasures of China's Liao Empire (907-1125)* (Milano: 5 Continents, 2006), 258.



Fig. 1.33 (left) Ananda and Fig. 1.34 (right) Kashyapa. Liao dynasty. Ding-type ware. Height 27 cm (left), 26.5 cm (right). Excavated from Qianwulibuge Village, Nailingao Township, Kunlun Banner of Inner Mongolia. Museum of Tongliao City.

Shakyamuni.⁸⁹ The young Ananda is usually placed to the left of a Buddha and the older Kashyapa to the right. Judging from their small size (27 cm high), it is most likely that they were destined for a family shrine.⁹⁰ Such small-scale sculptures with white glaze seem to have also been produced in some quantity within the Northern Song territory of north China. Among the most important production centres for this type were the Ding 定 kilns, which produced a distinctive type of white wares during the Song period, but few examples of these religious images survive today.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Ananda and Kasyapa are two great *arhats* who are, however, not included in the group of sixteen *arhats*.

⁹⁰ Shao, “Liaodai baici foxiang,” 144.

⁹¹ For example, see Regina Krah1, *Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection, Vol. 2* (London: Azimuth Editions, 1994), fig. 370. Recent excavations at Ding kiln sites yielded a small number of human and animal figures. However, religious figures seem to be rare. See Hebeisheng wenwu yanjiusuo 河北省文物研究所, *Fawei qiuzhen, zoujin Dingyao: Dingyao kaogu quan jilu, 2009-2011* 發微求真, 走進定窯: 定窯考古全紀錄 2009-2011 [The micro truth into Ding: Ding archaeological record 2009-2011] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2013).

The South

During the Northern Song dynasty, small ceramic religious sculptures also gained popularity further south. A significant discovery was made in 1922 at an underground stone chamber in Yangpigang, Chaozhou 潮州, Guangdong. Four porcelain figures of virtually identical form and size (between 30 cm and 31.5 cm high) with similar dedicatory inscriptions were found there [Fig. 1.35].⁹² The



Fig. 1.35 Buddha. Northern Song dynasty, dated 1067. Chaozhou ware. Height 31 cm. Excavated from Yangpigang, Chazhou, Guandong province. National Museum of China.

figures show the Buddha Shakyamuni sitting in meditation or *dhyana* on a square pedestal. They are entirely covered in a white glaze with a bluish tint, known as *qingbai* 青白 glaze, and the hair, the moustache, the eyes and the brows as well as the *urna* (the eye of wisdom of the Buddha) are highlighted in underglaze-brown

⁹² Guangdongsheng bowuguan 廣東省博物館, *Chaozhou Bijiaoshan Songdai yaozhi fajue baogao* 潮州筆架山宋代窯址發掘報告 [Excavation report on the Chaozhou Bijiaoshan kiln sites of the Song dynasty] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1981), 36-9.

painting. On each of the four sides of the pedestals are carved inscriptions. For instance, the inscription on one of the sculptures now in the National Museum of China reads:

潮州水東中窰甲弟子劉扶同妻陳氏十五娘發心釋迦牟尼佛永充供養為父劉用母李二十娘闔家男女乞保平安。治平四年丁未歲九月卅日題。匠人周明。

Chaozhou Shuidong Zhongyao shen dizi Liu Fu tong qi Chenshi shiwu niang faxin Shijiamuni fo yongchong gongyang wei fu Liu Yong mu Li ershi niang hejia nannü qibao pingan. Zhiping sinian dingwei sui jiuyue sari ti. Jiangren Zhou Ming.

[Liu Fu and his wife, from the Shuidong Zhongyao of Chaozhou, had this statue of Shakyamuni made for their lifetime devotional reverence with the sincere wish that their parents and the entire family would be safe and in peace under his blessings. This inscription was written on the thirtieth day of the ninth month in the fourth year of Zhiping (1067), by the craftsman Zhou Ming].⁹³

The inscriptions on the other three pieces are almost identical, revealing that the four Buddhas were commissioned by the same man, named Liu Fu, and his wife Chen and were made between 1067 and 1069 by a craftsman whose name was Zhou Ming.⁹⁴ They uniformly express the wish for the Buddha's blessing and protection of their parents and family. It is likely that these Buddhas had been dedicated on special occasions and enshrined in the household altar of the Liu family. Additionally, very similar fragments of Buddha figures — a Buddha head and four pedestals with similar dedicatory inscriptions — were unearthed at several sites in Chaozhou. All were commissioned by the Liu family, made by

⁹³ I am grateful to Ingrid Yeung for helping with this translation.

⁹⁴ For inscriptions of the other three figures, see Guangdongsheng bowuguan, *Chaozhou Bijiaoshan Songdai yaozhi fajue baogao*, 36.

Zhou Ming, and dated to around the time the four Yangpigang figures were created.⁹⁵ Buddha figures of this type, with *qingbai* glaze, can be traced to the Bijiaoshan 笔架山 kilns of Chaozhou, which served as an important production centre of *qingbai* wares during the Northern Song dynasty. Extensive excavations at the kiln sites revealed that Chaozhou also produced other types of Buddhist images, including bodhisattvas and *luohans*, but few examples have been found intact.⁹⁶

The production of *qingbai* glazed ceramic sculptures occurred contemporaneously in other places in southern China. A number of kilns producing *qingbai* figures were spread around Jiangxi province. Hutian 湖田, in Jingdezhen 景德镇, was arguably the most important production centre of religious images during and after the Northern Song dynasty. Intact pieces from the Northern Song are almost absent, but numerous fragments of diverse Buddhist images have been recovered at the kiln site.⁹⁷ Perhaps the most intriguing *qingbai* porcelain sculpture from Jingdezhen is a bodhisattva found in Gao'an 高安, Jiangxi in 1982 [Fig. 1.36].⁹⁸ The provenance of this figure is obscure, but it is assumed to have come from a tomb.⁹⁹ The bodhisattva is shown in a relaxed pose

⁹⁵ Ibid., 37-8.

⁹⁶ Li Bingyan 李炳炎, *Songdai Bijiaoshan Chaozhouyao* 宋代笔架山潮州窑 [Chaozhou Bijiaoshan kiln of the Song dynasty] (Shantou: Shantou daxue chubanshe, 2004).

⁹⁷ Jiangxisheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 景德镇文物考古研究所 and Jingdezhen minyao bowuguan 景德镇民窑博物馆, *Jingdezhen Hutian yaozhi: 1988-1999 nian kaogu fajue baogao* 景德镇湖田窑址: 1988-1999年考古发掘报告 [Hutian kiln site in Jingdezhen: report on the excavations from 1988-1999], Vol. 1 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2007), 290-96.

⁹⁸ Liu Yuhei 劉裕黑 and Xiong Lin 熊琳, "Jiangxi Gao'an chutu de Songdai cisu Guanyin," 江西高安出土的宋代瓷塑觀音 [A Song-dynasty porcelain Guanyin figure unearthed from Gao'an, Jiangxi], *WW* 9 (1987): 25-6.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 25.

on a rocky throne, with the left leg pendent and the other drawn up to support his elbow, his chin resting on his right hand. This specific sitting position, commonly known as the ‘royal ease’ posture (*rajalilasana*), is usually reserved for Guanyin, specifically Guanyin on Mount Potalaka, the mythical dwelling place of the bodhisattva.¹⁰⁰ However, the deity’s right hand gesture presented in this figure is uncommon for a Guanyin icon, but rather evokes images of a pensive bodhisattva. On the back of the pedestal is an inscription, which reads 劉永之造 *Liu Yongzhi zao* [Made by Liu Yongzhi].



Fig. 1.36 Guanyin. Northern Song dynasty (?). *Qingbai* ware. Height 60 cm. Unearthed at Gao'an, Jiangxi province. Gao'an County Museum.

Another interesting feature of the Gao'an bodhisattva is its large size, 60 cm high, which is atypical of a Northern Song *qingbai* figure. Based on the analysis of other ceramic wares unearthed at the site, the Gao'an Museum

¹⁰⁰ The *rajalilasana* posture and its many variants are thought to have originated in India, where they are more associated with rulers and Hindu gods. Marilyn Gridley, *Chinese Buddhist Sculpture under the Liao: Free Standing Works in Situ and Selected Examples from Public Collection* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1993), 167.

attributed the figure to the Northern Song dynasty.¹⁰¹ Unlike large-scale ceramic sculptures made in the north, for example the Yixian *luohans* and the Longquanwu figures, large figures seem unlikely to have been produced in the south. Surviving *qingbai* pieces are small in size, the highest being around 31.5 cm. Large *qingbai* sculptures comparable to the Gao'an example were more frequently produced during the Yuan dynasty toward the end of the thirteenth century. For example, a seated Guanyin, dated by inscription to 1298 or 1299, is currently in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas city [Fig. 1.37]. Several *qingbai* figures of bodhisattvas and Buddhas stylistically similar to this Guanyin are dated to the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Many questions still persist about the Gao'an bodhisattva: however, very little information is available, and many details remain unclear about this enigmatic figure.



Fig. 1.37 Guanyin. Yuan dynasty, dated 1298 or 1299. *Qingbai* ware. Height 51.44 cm. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

¹⁰¹ Liu and Xiong, "Jiangxi Gao'an chutu de Songdai cisu Guanyin," 26.

In addition to white porcelain sculptures, green-glazed examples were developed during the Northern Song in the southeast coastal provinces. The most important example of this kind may be a group of stoneware figures in yellowish-green glaze that was unearthed in 1978 at the joint tomb of Li Bin 李彬 and his wife, from 1091, in Liyang 溧陽, Zhenjiang 鎮江, Jiangsu.¹⁰² The tomb contained thirty-four religious figures in human and animal form: the Four Cardinal Directions 四神 (four figures), the Five Planets 五星神 (five figures), the Twenty-eight Constellations 二十八宿 (eight figures), the Perfected Warrior 鎮武 (one figure) [Fig. 1.38], the Buddha (one figure) [Fig. 1.39], the Officer of Merit 功曹



Fig. 1.38 (left) Zhenwu Fig. 1.39 (right) Buddha. Northern Song dynasty. Green-glazed stoneware. Excavated from the tomb of Li Bin and his wife, dated 1091, at Zhenjiang, Jiangsu province.

(two figures), the *devas* (two figures) and the guardians (eight figures).¹⁰³ This is

¹⁰² Zhenjiangshi bowuguan 鎮江市博物館 and Liyangxian wenhuaguan 溧陽縣文化館, “Jiangsu Liyang zhuze Bei Song Li Bin fufu mu,” 江苏溧陽竹簣北宋李彬夫婦墓 [Northern Song tomb of Li Bin and his wife at Liyang, Jiangsu], *WW* 5 (1980): 34-44.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 36-7.

one of the largest assemblages of ceramic religious sculptures that has been found in China. Despite that, this group is little-known and has not been closely examined.

The discovery of these figures is significant in that a variety of religious images were found in a firmly-dated archaeological context. This offers critical evidence for studying the evolution of Chinese religious beliefs and associated imagery during the Song period. It is likely that the excavated religious images were once enshrined at the household altar of the deceased couple. In particular, the presence of many Daoist images which virtually disappeared after the ceramic versions of Xiwangmu during the Eastern Han dynasty demonstrates the spread of Daoism in the Northern Song. Most interesting of all the Daoist images is the Perfected Warrior or Zhenwu, one of the most prominent figures in the Daoist pantheon, whose cult began to gain popularity by that time.¹⁰⁴ Equally noteworthy is the coexistence of both Daoist and Buddhist figures at the same site. This suggests that the amalgamation of Daoism and Buddhism became popular among common believers during the Song dynasty. The *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 [Record of the listener], a collection of supernatural accounts compiled by Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202) records an anecdote of his father upbraiding a ghost: “I worship Zhenwu, because he is efficacious, and I also have images of Buddha, and of the earth and stove gods. How is it that you come here?”¹⁰⁵ As this passage reveals, the common believers like Hong’s father do not care whether the gods they

¹⁰⁴ Zhenwu will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted from Valerie Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China 1127-1276* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 30.

worship are Buddhist or Daoist. They do not choose one religious tradition; instead, they choose their personal gods for protection according to their needs from different traditions. The Zhenjiang group of ceramic figures offers rare material evidence of syncretic religious beliefs of lay people during the Song period. Significantly, such amalgamation is more visible in ceramic sculptures than in any other medium, as will be demonstrated later in this thesis.

Another important find of Northern Song celadon sculpture is a bodhisattva that belongs to the Wenzhou Museum. This small figure (24 cm high), datable to 1115, was discovered in 1964 during the demolition of the Baixiang Pagoda 白象塔 (built between 1103 and 1115) in Wenzhou 温州, Zhejiang province [Fig. 1.40].¹⁰⁶ The pagoda yielded a rich variety of ceramic Buddhist



Fig. 1.40 Guanyin. Northern Song dynasty. Ou ware. Height 24 cm. Excavated from the Baixiang Pagoda, dated 1115, at Wenzhou, Zhejiang province. Wenzhou Museum.

¹⁰⁶ Xu Dingshui 徐定水 and Jin Baidong 金柏東, “Wenzhoushi Bei Song Baixiangta qingli baogao,” 温州市北宋白象塔清理報告 [Report on the excavation of the Baixiang pagoda, Wenzhou], *WW* 5 (1987): 1-14, 99-100. A very similar celadon Guanyin figure is in the Tan Swie Hian Collection, Singapore.

figures, including Buddhas, bodhisattvas, *luohans*, monks and guardians. While most of them are made of earthenware or painted earthenware images, the present figure is a unique stoneware example entirely covered with celadon glaze. It is attributed to the Ou 瓯 kilns, a flourishing celadon production centre around Wenzhou in southern Zhejiang during the period.

This celadon figure represents Guanyin seated on Mount Potalaka. The bodhisattva is seated with one knee resting on the seat and the other raised with the feet placed together, a variant form of Guanyin seated at royal ease.¹⁰⁷ The bodhisattva's identity is further testified by a bird in front of the figure, which probably depicts the white parrot, one of the acolytes of Guanyin.¹⁰⁸ A water bottle, another attribute of Guanyin, could have originally been placed next to the bird before the bodhisattva. On the interior of the rockwork base is written in black ink: 弟子 □ □ □ *Dizi* □ □ □ [Disciple □ □ □].¹⁰⁹ This suggests that the figure was commissioned by a devotee of Guanyin (whose name is now lost) for the relic deposit at the pagoda.

Guanyin on Mount Potalaka was one of the most widely reproduced iconographic forms of Avalokiteshvara in the Chinese Buddhist tradition, especially from the tenth to fourteenth centuries. The popularity of this particular

¹⁰⁷ Buddhist scriptures do not describe the Potalaka Guanyin as sitting in a specific relaxed pose. Guanyin on Potalaka has often been described as the Water-Moon Guanyin, or Guanyin of the South Sea. Indeed, all of them are seated on the rocky shore of Mount Potalaka. In contrast to painting, in sculpture it is difficult to precisely identify the iconography of Guanyin in this manifestation. The most distinctive feature of the iconography of the Water-Moon Guanyin is the large nimbus resembling a full moon that envelopes the bodhisattva. The iconographic discrepancy between Guanyin on Potalaka and Guanyin of the South Sea will be discussed in Chapter Three.

¹⁰⁸ For the white parrot, see Chapter Three.

¹⁰⁹ Wenzhou bowuguan 温州博物館, *Wenzhou gutaoci* 温州古陶瓷 [Ancient Pottery and Porcelain of Wenzhou] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2001), 120, pl. 111.

image was probably associated with the growing temple cult of the bodhisattva during the Song dynasty. Large-scale sculptures of Guanyin in this form began being produced in great numbers from the tenth century onward, as is attested by numerous surviving examples that are now preserved in many museum collections, such as one carved wood figure in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, dated to the eleventh or twelfth centuries [Fig. 1.41]. Despite its uncertain provenance, the sculpture may have once been enshrined in a temple. In addition to monumental temple sculptures, many small gilt bronze figures of the bodhisattva in this representation, possibly made for private devotion, are known today [Fig. 1.42]. The small celadon example of the Baixiang Pagoda is one of the



Fig. 1.41 (left) Guanyin. Liao or Jin dynasty. Polychrome wood. Height 241.3 cm. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

Fig. 1.42 (right) Guanyin. Jin to Yuan dynasty. Gilt bronze. Height 28.6 cm. British Museum (1947.7-12.392).

earliest dated depictions of the Potalaka Guanyin presented in Chinese sculpture and therefore provides valuable evidence for the development of Guanyin worship and iconography during the Song period. There are very few other Northern Song

ceramic Guanyin sculptures known. More importantly, it is the earliest surviving ceramic sculpture of Guanyin found in Zhejiang, where the cult devoted to the worship of this bodhisattva grew most strongly and rapidly from the Southern Song period onward, as we will see in the next chapter.

Conclusion

As this survey of the development of Chinese ceramic sculpture demonstrated, although ceramic figures of human images largely dominated the production of ceramic sculptures in earlier periods, religious images emerged in China in the second century CE and evolved slowly to become a distinctive genre represented in ceramic sculptures by the Liao and Northern Song periods. This was a time when many more types, forms and sizes of such images were produced in both north and south China and were used in a variety of contexts. However, while a great deal of scholarly attention has been paid to large-scale temple sculptures, such as the Yixian *luohans*, due to their high quality, small religious sculptures have not been afforded as much examination, either in the field of Chinese ceramics or of Chinese religious sculpture. Nevertheless, these small religious figures became an important part of the long, rich history of Chinese ceramic sculpture from the Liao-Northern Song periods onward, and, as we shall see in the following chapters, the production of small ceramic religious sculptures continued to thrive in China alongside popular devotion, which became more prevalent from the Song dynasty. Our next chapter explores figures specifically made at the kilns

in Longquan during the Southern Song period, the beginning of a production period that lasted until the end of the Ming dynasty.

CHAPTER TWO

The Beginnings of Longquan Sculpture Production during the Southern Song Dynasty

Introduction

The Southern Song 南宋 dynasty (1127-1279) was an important period in the development of Longquan celadon. During this period, the Zhejiang region transformed into the political, economic and cultural centre of China. The relocation of the imperial court to Lin'an 臨安 (present-day Hangzhou 杭州) also contributed to significant developments in the local ceramic industry. Longquan, in southwestern Zhejiang, rose to prominence as the main production centre of celadon ware in China. In order to better understand how and why the Longquan kilns developed and flourished during and after the Southern Song, it is important to first discuss briefly the Zhejiang ceramic industry in the Southern Song. Then, in the second part of the chapter, the focus narrows to examine the extant Longquan religious figures from the Southern Song and also contemporaneous works that were made outside Zhejiang but have been found in the region, all with a view to illuminating the close relationship between the emergence of divine images in Longquan and the vibrant cultural and religious landscape in Zhejiang at the time.

Zhejiang Ceramic Industry in the Southern Song

The transition from the Northern Song to the Southern Song brought significant changes to Zhejiang. During the latter part of the Song dynasty, the political, economic and cultural centre of China moved from north China to the Zhejiang region. Hangzhou, which had been a regional administrative city before the Southern Song, rose to national pre-eminence by becoming the capital of the Han Chinese Empire in 1132. It remained in power in south China until the dynasty was overthrown by the Mongols in 1279. With Hangzhou as the imperial capital of the Southern Song, the entire Liangzhe circuit (Liangzhe lu 两浙路) — present-day Zhejiang, southern Jiangsu and Shanghai — benefited.¹¹⁰ The influx of emigrants from the northern regions resulted in rapid population increase in the Lower Yangzi basin. Hangzhou emerged as one of the most highly urbanised and commercialised areas in China. Urban development was not confined to the capital. Continuous expansion was common in all large towns in the southeast, making the region the richest and most densely populated in China at that time.¹¹¹

The presence of the capital in Zhejiang brought great wealth and prosperity to the region and served to spur various forms of economic development during this

¹¹⁰ The circuit (*lu* 路) or province was largest administrative unit of the Song empire below the central government controlling a group of prefectures (*zhou* 州). During the Southern Song, Zhejiang was divided into two regions: Liangzhe xilu 两浙西路 (the Western Region of Liangzhe) or Zhexi 浙西 and Liangzhe donglu 两浙东路 (the Eastern Region of Liangzhe) or Zhedong 浙東. For a map of Zhejiang during this period, see Tan Qixiang 譚其驤 ed., *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji: 6 Song Liao Jin shiqi* 中國歷史地圖集: 6 宋遼金時期 [The historical atlas of China: Vol. 6. Song, Liao and Jin dynasties] Shanghai: Ditu chubanshe, 1982), 59-60.

¹¹¹ On the urban development in the Lower Yangzi region during the Southern Song, see Yoshinobu Shiba, "Urbanization and Development of Markets in the Lower Yangtze Valley," in *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China*, ed. John Haeger (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975), 13-48. Also see, Jacques Gernet, *Daily Life in China on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion, 1250-1276* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1962), 22-58.

period. Agriculture improved considerably and expanded; trade and commerce thrived. Advances in handicraft industries, such as silk, tea and ceramics, contributed to rapid economic growth.

It can be argued that the Southern Song dynasty marked a turning point in the long history of Zhejiang's celadon production. By the mid-Northern Song, the ceramic industry at the Yue kilns which had prospered for long, had begun to decline.¹¹² Both textual and material evidence reveal that production of Yue wares on the northern plains of Zhejiang continued into the early Southern Song, and their products were being supplied to the imperial court, but they appear to have been failing.¹¹³ In about the mid-twelfth century, the Southern Song court set up new official kilns in Hangzhou to create a supply of a new imperial ware. Literary sources suggest that there were two kilns, an early one under the supervision of Xiunesi 修内司 [Palace maintenance office], also known as Neiyao 內窯 [Inner kiln], and another at Jiaotania 郊壇下.¹¹⁴ Most scholars acknowledge that the Jiaotania kiln sites were located at the foot of Wugui Mountain 五桂山 on the

¹¹² There seem to have been various factors such as the depletion of porcelain clay deposits and fire wood and strong competition from the north. For a discussion of the decline of the Yue kilns, see Li Gang 李剛, "Lun Yueyao shuailuo yu Longquanyao xingqi," 論越窯衰落與龍泉窯興起 [On the decline of the Yue kilns and the rise of the Longquan kilns], *WenBo* 文博 2 (1987): 73-7.

¹¹³ According to *Zhongxing lishu* 中興禮書 [Book on rites], during the early years of Gaozong 高宗 emperor's reign (r. 1127-62), Yue kilns were asked to make ritual items on several occasions. Li ed., *Qian feng cui se*, 32-3. Recent excavations at Silongkou 寺龍口, a Yue kiln site, yielded some early Southern Song fragments of celadon vessels with thick, opaque, sky-blue glazes (*tianqing* 天青) similar to the Northern Song Ru wares. Zhejiangsheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 浙江省文物考古研究所 et al., "Zhejiang Yueyao Silongkou yaozhi fajue jianbao," 浙江越窯寺龍口窯址發掘簡報 [A preliminary report on the excavation of Yue kiln sites at Silongkou, Zhejiang], *WW* 11 (2001): 23-42.

¹¹⁴ This record came from Ye Zhi's 葉寘 *Tan zhai bi heng* 坦齋筆衡 [Tan Zhai's notes]. For a discussion of *Tan zhai bi heng* and other sources stating Southern Song official kilns, see Li Minju 李民舉, "Song Guanyao lungao," 宋官窯論稿 [A brief discussion on Song Guan ware], *WW* 8 (1994): 47-54.

outskirts of Hangzhou.¹¹⁵ In contrast, kiln sites of Xiuneisi remained obscure until recently. In 1996, the kiln known as Laohudong 老虎洞 was excavated at Fenghuang Mountain 鳳凰山, close to the walls of the Southern Song palace in Hangzhou.¹¹⁶ Chinese archaeologists have determined that this site was the one described in historical records as Xiunesi or Neiyao.

Archaeological finds at these production sites have included a variety of vessels and objects, ranging from tableware to ritual and decorative items made exclusively for the court. The new, southern, imperial ware produced at both kilns was called Guan 官 ('official') ware. In fact, Guan ware was different from traditional Zhejiang celadon in its glaze composition, forms and even manner of firing, appearing to be closer to Ru 汝 ware, which had been favoured by the Northern Song emperors. Although Guan ware was modelled on Ru ware, it was often complex in form and embellished with much richer, and thicker glazes in greyish blue tones, usually with large, prominent crackles for decorative effect [Fig. 2.1]. Throughout the Southern Song period, this new style of celadon ware developed at the official kilns had a profound influence on Zhejiang celadon production, particularly at kilns in the south, centred around the Longquan area.

¹¹⁵ The kilns were first discovered in the 1920s and have been excavated several times since. In particular, a thorough survey and excavation took place from 1984 to 1986, producing large quantities of vessel fragments and kiln implements. See Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中國社會科學院考古研究所 et al., *Nan Song Guanyao* 南宋官窯 [Official kilns of Southern Song] (Beijing: Zhongguo dabaiké quanshu chubanshe, 1996).

¹¹⁶ Numerous fragments of high quality that are very similar to extant Guan wares have been recovered from the Southern Song stratum. Du Zhengxian 杜正賢 and Ma Dongfeng 馬東風, "Hangzhou Fenghuangshan Laohudong yaozhi kaogu qude zhongda chengguo," 杭州鳳凰山老虎洞窯址考古取得重大成果 [Important findings obtained from the archaeological study of Laohudong kiln sites at Mount Fenghuang, Hangzhou], *Nanfang wenwu* 南方文物 4 (2000): 4-7. For illustrations see, Du Zhenxian 杜正賢 ed., *Hangzhou Laohudong yaozhi ciqi jingxuan* 杭州老虎洞窯址瓷器精選 [Selected masterpieces from Laohudong kiln site, Hangzhou] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2002).



Fig. 2.1 Eight-petal lobed dish. Southern Song dynasty. Guan ware. Diameter 16.8 cm. Sir Percival David Collection at the British Museum (PDF A46).

The Rise of the Longquan Kilns

The Longquan district is located in a mountainous area of south-western Zhejiang. Celadon production has a long history in the area dating back to the Three Kingdoms period. Nonetheless, it seems there were few kilns and only small-scale production until the early Song period. Archaeological surveys at kiln sites have identified about thirty production sites in operation during the Northern Song, mainly concentrated in the towns of Longquan, Qingyuan and Lishui, and producing wares similar to contemporaneous Yue wares with thin, greyish-green glaze.¹¹⁷ Therefore, several scholars have suggested that wares produced prior to the Southern Song should not be included in the category of ‘Longquan ware’,

¹¹⁷ Zhu Boqian 朱伯謙 ed., *Longquanyao qingci* 龍泉窯青瓷 [Celadons from Longquan kilns] (Taipei: Yishujia chubanshe, 1998), 10 (in Chinese), 32 (in English).

since it was only in the late eleventh to twelfth century that the kilns at Longquan expanded their scale of production and began to develop their own style, as demonstrated by a funerary urn with spouts [Fig. 2.2]. The glaze became greenish-yellow, and carved and incised decoration became more robust. Many burial jars of this type have been excavated in tombs at the Zhejiang region.



Fig. 2.2 Covered five-tube jar. Northern Song dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 40.1 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B60P151.A-.B).

From the end of the Northern Song onward, the kilns at Longquan developed quickly, as the focus of the Zhejiang celadon industry shifted from north to south. Here, rich deposits of porcelain clay, timber for fuel, an abundant water supply and mountain slopes on which to build the climbing kilns were readily available. The kilns were ‘dragon kilns’ (*longyao* 龍窯), which could

accommodate more than 10,000 pieces at once, enabling mass production.¹¹⁸ Several dragon kilns of 60-80 metres have been discovered in the Longquan area.¹¹⁹ In addition, transportation was improved significantly within southern Zhejiang in 1092, when more than 165 local river beds were dredged.¹²⁰ Despite the natural impediment of mountains, the Ou River was navigable year round. Longquan ware was packed onto boats and floated down to the sea at Wenzhou, then sold throughout the country and abroad via the major Zhejiang port of Ningbo.

When the Song court moved south to Hangzhou, a new source of patronage and a renewed demand for fine ceramic ware arrived in Zhejiang. During the Southern Song period, Longquan ware evolved, rapidly improving in both quality and augmenting in quantity. More than a hundred production sites were scattered throughout Longquan.¹²¹ These were centred on Dayao 大窯 in Liutian, which produced much superior-quality Longquan ware. In about 1200, Longquan ware witnessed a transformation and began to be influenced by production techniques of the official kilns, but the products remained different.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Dragon kilns are long and narrow kilns built against the side of a hill with consecutive chambers between the fire box at the lower end and a chimney at the higher end. For more on dragon kilns, see Rose Kerr and Nigel Wood, *Science and Civilisation in China Vol. 5, Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Part 12, Ceramic Technology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 347-64.

¹¹⁹ Jiang Zhongyi 蔣忠義, "Zhejiang Longquanxian Anfu Longquan yaozhi fajue jianbao," 浙江龍泉賢安福龍泉窯址發掘簡報 [Brief report on the excavation at the Longquan Anfu kiln site, Longquan county, Zhejiang], *KG* 6 (1981): 504-10, 585-88.

¹²⁰ *Longquan xianzhi* 龍泉縣志 [Gazetteer of Longquan county] Qianlong 乾隆 27th reign edition, *juan* 12, 7, quoted in Zhu ed., *Longquanyao qingci*, 14 (in Chinese), 35 (in English).

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 14 (in Chinese), 36 (in English).

¹²² The earliest known piece of Longquan ware with this unique glaze is a *meiping* vase excavated in 1979 from a tomb dated 1195, and it is now in the Songyang Museum, Zhejiang. For illustration, see *ibid.*, pl. 88.

Longquan ware of this period had its own character, with a distinctive, pale blue-green, unctuous glaze that has an almost jade-like texture [Fig. 2.3]. This glaze is of the lime-alkali type and is characterised by its semi-opacity. It was applied in multiple layers, often with minimal or no decoration. The body material of Longquan ware comprised light-grey porcelain stone and iron-rich, so-called ‘purple clay’ (*zijin tu* 紫金土), which allowed for a thin body. Longquan clay reoxidises during the cooling in the kiln so that it appears orange-red where unglazed, as often seen on the foot ring of vessels.



Fig. 2.3 Funerary urn. Southern Song dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 25.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum (C.28&A-1935).

Longquan kilns produced popular wares but also seem to have supplied the court and the aristocracy in the capital, possibly because the official kilns had only small-scale production. Fine, crackled wares imitating Guan wares were made in Longquan [Fig. 2.4]. Numerous pieces comparable to this new, imperial ware



Fig. 2.4 Bronze *hu*-shaped vase. Southern Song dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 22.3 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B60P1483).

have been found at the Dayao and Xikou sites.¹²³ Furthermore, during the Southern Song, there was a wider variety in vessel forms. Tableware, such as bowls and dishes, constituted an important part of the Longquan output, along with other implements for daily use. However, new types of vessels were introduced in this period, including ritual wares, such as flower vases and incense burners that often imitated ancient bronze and jade artefacts and objects for the scholar's studio. Although Longquan developed a distinctive style later than other Zhejiang celadon wares, it ultimately established an enduring tradition for green-glazed stoneware production in China. With metropolitan patronage and trade expansion, Longquan kilns became prominent and the main suppliers of celadon ware to both domestic and export markets during and after the Southern Song.

¹²³ Tang Suying 湯蘇嬰, "Longquan Wayao qun heitaixi chanpin ji xiangguan wenti," 龍泉瓦窯群黑胎类产品及相關問題 [Enquiry into dark-bodied wares from Longquan Wayao kiln], *KG* 11 (1993): 1031-35, 1064.

The Religious Landscape of Zhejiang and Longquan Ceramic Sculptures

Among the many different types of Longquan celadon ware during the Southern Song, figures might have accounted for a small portion. It is not clear when Longquan began to produce ceramic figures of religious images, and there is no evidence of the extent to which Longquan manufactured this particular form. Although limited, material evidence from excavations suggests that by the late Southern Song sculpture production had been well established in Longquan.

Three Longquan Figures of the Eight Immortals

The earliest extant examples of figures from Longquan may be three small figures of Daoist immortals, unearthed in 1960 at the Dayao kiln site (second tier of T 1-3).¹²⁴ They represent Zhongli Quan, Han Xiangzi and He Xiangnu, three of the so-called Eight Immortals (*baxian* 八仙) [Figs 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7]. The excavators have dated the figures to the late Southern Song, between 1200 and 1278 and probably closer to 1278, based on comparison with other excavated materials at the site.¹²⁵ Although this group of thirteenth-century figures was found more than

¹²⁴ Zhu Boqian 朱伯謙 and Wang Shilun 王士倫, “Zhejiang Longquan qingci yaozhi diaocha fajue de zhuyao shouhuo,” 浙江省龍泉青瓷窯址調查發掘的主要收穫 [Major findings from the excavation of Longquan celadon kiln sites in Zhejiang], *WW* 1 (1963): 27-39; Zhu Boqian 朱伯謙, “Longquan Dayao guci yaozhi fajue baogao,” 龍泉大窯古瓷窯址報告 [Excavation report on the Longquan Dayao kiln], in *Longquan qingci yanjiu*, 龍泉青瓷研究 [Study of Longquan celadon wares], ed. Zhejiangsheng qinggongye ting 浙江省輕工業廳 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1989), 38-67. The Dayao kiln site also yielded a small head likely of a Daoist figure, in T 12. For illustration, see Zhu and Wang, “Zhejiang Longquan qingci yaozhi diaocha fajue de zhuyao shouhuo,” fig. 17.

¹²⁵ Zhu, “Longquan Daoyao guci yaozhi fajue baogao,” 64-5.

fifty years ago, it only recently began to be studied as one of the earliest visual depictions of members of the Eight Immortals.¹²⁶



Fig. 2.5 (left) Zhongli Quan, Fig. 2.6 (centre) Han Xiangzi and Fig. 2.7 (right) He Xiangnu. Southern Song dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 18 cm. Excavated at the Dayao kiln site, Longquan, Zhejiang province. Zhejiang Provincial Museum.

The first figure portrays Zhongli Quan 鐘離權, also called Han Zhongli 漢鐘離, generally considered the leader of the Eight Immortals.¹²⁷ Seated on a rocky throne, Zhongli Quan wears long, flowing robes, from the bottom of which his feet protrude, and a woven-leaf apron over the shoulders. His right hand is resting on his chest, exposed through his partially open robe, and his left hand is missing. Judging from iconography, the left hand may originally have carried one of his attributes, either a fan made of feathers or palm leaves for reviving the dead, or a

¹²⁶ Elaine C. Buck, "The Eight Immortals on Yuan and Ming Ceramics" (PhD thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2000); Birgitta Augustin, "Eight Daoist Immortals in the Yuan Dynasty: Note on the Origin of the Group and its Iconography," *Orientalia* 41, no. 9 (2010): 81-7.

¹²⁷ References to Zhongli Quan can be found in various Song and Ming literature. According to some sources such as *Xuanhe shupu* 宣和書譜, he is said to have lived during the Han dynasty. *Xuanhe shupu* 宣和書譜 [Catalogue of calligraphic works of the Xuanhe reign period] in *Congshu jicheng* 叢書集成 [Collected collectanea, 1st series], ed. Wang Yunwu 王雲五 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1935-37), 19: 441.

peach of immortality. The immortal has a somewhat grotesque look on his full, round face, with seemingly Central Asian features, large eyes, elongated ears, a broad nose and a long beard around an open mouth.¹²⁸ His hair is arranged in two topknots, one of which is broken. The hands, feet, belly and head of the figure and the rockwork base are unglazed, whereas the remainder is covered with a thick, celadon glaze.

The other figure can be identified as Han Xiangzi 韓湘子, or Han Xiang 韓湘.¹²⁹ This immortal is depicted as a young member of the scholarly elite, seated on a rocky pedestal, with feet crossed on the rocks below. He wears a cap and is dressed in a long, round-necked robe that conceals his right arm and is tied with a cord at the waist. Since his left hand is damaged, it is not clear whether it held one of this immortal's attributes, such as his emblem, the flute. The exposed parts of his face, hands and feet are in biscuit.

The lotus leaf held by the third female figure suggests its identification with He Xiangnu 何仙姑, or Immortal Woman He, the sole female member of the

¹²⁸ Zhongli Quan's biography in *Liexian quanzhuan* 列仙全傳 [The complete biography of immortals], dated to 1598, describes him as the blue-eyed barbarian monk. Translated in Stephen Little, *Realm of the Immortals: Daoism in the Arts of China* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1988), 32-3.

¹²⁹ The earliest historic account of Han Xiangzi may be *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎, compiled by the Tang dynasty scholar Duan Chengshi 段成式 (803-63). According to this source, Han Xiangzi is believed to be a nephew of the famous Tang scholar and poet Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824). Duan Chengshi 段成式, *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎 [Miscellaneous morsels from Youyang] *Qianji*, juan 18 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1975).

Eight Immortals.¹³⁰ He Xiang is frequently depicted, as in this figure, holding a long-stemmed lotus in one hand, as the surname *He* means ‘lotus’ in Chinese.¹³¹ The immortal is seated on a rocky pedestal in a posture similar to that of Han Xiangzi. She is dressed in a wide sleeved, voluminous robe tied with a belt at the waist and wears hemp shoes. Her hair is swept back in coiled tresses falling to the shoulders on either side. The face, neck and hands are left unglazed, while the remainder is coated with a celadon glaze.

These three Longquan figures were probably produced as part of an Eight Immortals set or as derivatives from such a set, since they are virtually identical in terms of format, size and style and were unearthed together at the same kiln site. Members of the Eight Immortals have more often been depicted and described in the context of their group rather than as individuals. Nevertheless, the origin of the Eight Immortals as a group is unclear. Furthermore, there is more than one group known as ‘the Eight Immortals’, with each group having different members.¹³² In fact, Zhongli Quan, Han Xiangzi and He Xiang are members of the Eight Immortals in their modern configuration. The other members included in

¹³⁰ Many tales of He Xiang describe her a legendary figure from the Tang dynasty. According to Zhao Daoyi’s 趙道一 *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世真仙體道通鑑 of the Yuan dynasty, He Xiang was a daughter of He Tai 何泰 of Zengcheng 增城 in Guangzhou in modern Guangdong province. She was instructed by a divine person in a dream to eat powdered mica and ingest it. During the Jinglong 景龍 reign (707-10) of the Tang, she achieved immortality. Zhao Daoyi 趙道一, *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世真仙體道通鑑 [Comprehensive mirror of perfected immortals and those who embodied the Dao through the ages] *Houji*, juan 5, 8a-b, DZ 296.

¹³¹ Louis Cort et al., *Joined Colors: Decoration and Meaning in Chinese Porcelain: Ceramics from Collectors in the Min Chiu Society* (Washington D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1993), 45. He Xiang is also occasionally portrayed carrying a large ladle or a basket, which is often filled with several objects associated with Daoist immortality, such as mushrooms and peaches. Sometimes, she is simply holding a fly whisk.

¹³² The earliest group can be dated back to the second century BCE and is known as the “Eight Worthies”. On different groups of the Eight Immortals, see W. Perceval Yetts, “More Notes on the Eight Immortals,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 3 (1922): 397-426.

this configuration are Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, Zhang Guolao 張果老, Li Tieguai 李鐵拐, Lan Caihe 藍采和 and Cao Guojiu 曹國舅.¹³³ While there are textual sources on individual members of the group from as early as the Tang and Song periods, early references to the whole group are scarce and inconclusive.¹³⁴

Despite uncertainty about the date of the first appearance of the modern group, by at least the beginning of the thirteenth century these eight Daoist immortals appear to have been assembled as a group and their depiction began to be standardised as we know it today,¹³⁵ with occasional variation in composition.¹³⁶ Probably the oldest known extant visual representations of the Eight Immortals group come from early thirteenth-century tombs in the north. They are two sets of reliefs with the Eight Immortals found in Jin dynasty tombs of the Dong family, near Houma, Shanxi province and are datable to circa 1210. The first tomb, discovered in 1959, has a single chamber with a domed octagonal ceiling

¹³³ For references to and bibliographies of these individual members of the group, see Wang Hanmin 王漢民, *Baxian yu Zhongguo wenhua* 八仙與中國文化 [The Eight Immortals and Chinese culture] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue, 2000), 10-31.

¹³⁴ Elaine Buck has noted that only two pre-Ming period references to the group are known, other than those from plays. The authors of these two references are associated with Quanzhen Daoism, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Buck, “The Eight Immortals on Yuan and Ming Ceramics” 40.

¹³⁵ Recently, Birgitta Augustin has suggested that the group probably developed in the Northern Song period, based on textual sources of the Qing dynasty Shaanxi gazetteer and on Song dynasty records in painting catalogues. However, no visual materials dating from the northern Song survive today. Augustin, “Eight Daoist Immortals in the Yuan Dynasty,” 86.

¹³⁶ The set number of the group has always been eight out of twelve immortal figures but its constituent members have changed over time. While Zhongli Quan, Lü Dongbin, Li Tieguai, Han Xiangzi and Lan Caihe are present all the time, others are selected at one time and thus appear inconsistently. Anning Jing, “The Eight Immortals: The Transformation of T’ang and Sung Taoist Eccentrics during the Yüan Dynasty,” in *Arts of the Sung and Yüan*, ed. Maxwell K. Hearn and Judith G. Smith (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 214.

occupied by tiles of the Eight Immortals.¹³⁷ Their placement on the ceiling may suggest that the figures may have served as guides to immortality rather than mere symbols of it.¹³⁸

The ceiling tiles with carvings of the group, unearthed from tomb 65H4M102, are perhaps more sophisticated in sculptural quality [Fig. 2.8].¹³⁹



Fig. 2.8 Ceiling tiles with the Eight Immortals. Jin dynasty. Height 54 cm. Excavated from tomb 65H4M102 datable to circa 1210 near Houma, Shanxi province. Shanxi Museum.

Eight male immortals are assembled as a group on eight trapezoidal-shaped tiles, which originally may have been placed on the ceiling of the tomb in the same

¹³⁷ Shanxisheng wenguanhui Houma gongzuozhan 山西省文管會侯馬工作站, “Houma Jindai Dongshi mu jieshao,” 侯馬金代董氏介紹 [An Introduction to the Jin period Houma tombs of the Dong brothers] *WW* 6 (1959): 50-5. Although scholars agree that the tiles depict the group, there are speculations about the identification of each immortal based on confusion over attributes associated with more than one member of the group. Elaine Buck, “The Eight Immortal Group on Jin Dynasty Tomb Tiles,” in *Song Ceramics: Art History, Archaeology and Technology*, ed. Stacey Pierson (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, 2004), 107-8.

¹³⁸ Buck, *ibid.*, 103-18.

¹³⁹ Shanxisheng kaogu yanjiusuo Houma gongzuozhan 山西省考古研究所侯馬工作站, “Houma 65H4M102 Jin mu,” 侯馬65H4M102金墓 [The Jin dynasty tomb 65H4M102 in Houma], *Wenwu jikan* 文物季刊 4 (1997): 17-27.

manner as in the first tomb. He Xiang, the only confirmed female immortal, does not appear in this formulation of the eight and seems to have been replaced by Xu Shenweng 徐神翁, a male immortal.¹⁴⁰ Although He Xiang is missing from these tombs, depictions of Zhongli Quan and Han Xiangzi show most of the iconographic features that appeared on the Longquan ceramic figures (i.e. a bare-bellied man holding a fan and a young scholar wearing a cap), suggesting that their iconography was well established by the early thirteenth century.

The reasons why the female immortal is excluded here remain obscure. In fact, her image seems to be absent in the north, as is also the case on contemporary Jin bronze mirrors featuring the Eight Immortals.¹⁴¹ In contrast, it is interesting to see that He Xiang iconography is present in the Longquan ceramic figure in the south. We do not know when and where this iconography was created, but it appears that the Longquan figure of He Xiang is the earliest known evidence of a visual representation of this female immortal with her distinctive attributes. This could further suggest that it was perhaps in the south that He Xiang was added to the group of the Eight Immortals and the modern configuration of the group was crystallised.

Recent studies have associated the origin and formation of this particular configuration of the Eight Immortals with Quanzhen 全真, or the Complete

¹⁴⁰ Shi Jinming 石金鳴 and Willow Weilan Hai Chang 海蔚藍, *Shengsi tongle: Shanxi Jindai xiqu zhuan diao yishu* 生死同樂：山西金代戏曲砖雕藝術 [Theater, life and the afterlife: tomb décor of the Jin dynasty from Shanxi] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), 145, cat. no. 82. On Xu Shenweng, see Wang, *Baxian yu Zhongguo wenhua*, 34-5.

¹⁴¹ Augustin, “Eight Daoist Immortals in the Yuan Dynasty,” 86, fig. 7.

Perfection tradition of Daoism, which originated during the Jin dynasty.¹⁴² It has been suggested that the devotion extended to Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin as two of the Five Patriarchs (*wuzu* 五祖) of Quanzhen was a major contribution to the renown of the Eight Immortals group.¹⁴³ Quanzhen is the first major monastic form of Daoism that has survived into the present alongside the more community-based priesthood of Zhengyi 正一, or the Orthodox Unity tradition, which evolved from Tianshi 天師, or the Celestial Masters tradition, which was founded by Zhang Daoling 張道陵 in the Eastern Han period. Founded by Wang Zhe 王嘉, also known as Wang Chongyang 王重陽 (1113-1170), Quanzhen was among the most popular and dominant sects of Daoism in north China under Jurchen rule.¹⁴⁴ According to the Quanzhen legend, Wang Zhe reputedly encountered Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin in 1159.¹⁴⁵ After his death, these two immortals were added to the official lineage of Quanzhen as Wang's spiritual masters.

From the late eleventh century the Quanzhen sect dominated the religious scene of north China for about a century, overshadowing not only other Daoist

¹⁴² Jing, "The Eight Immortals," 213-25; Stephen Little and Shawn Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 319.

¹⁴³ Jing, *ibid.* The other three are Laozi 老子, Donghua dijun 東華帝君, and Liu Haichan 劉海蟾.

¹⁴⁴ Daoism was followed by the emergence of several new sects in the Jurchen-ruled Jin dynasty. Along with Quanzhen, there were also Taiyi 太一 [Grand Unity] and Dadao 大道 [Great Way]. On Daoism during the Jin, see Yao Tao-chung, "Buddhism and Taoism under the Chin," in *China under Jurchen Rule: Essays on Chin Intellectual and Cultural history*, eds. Hoyt Cleveland Tillman and Stephen H. West (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 151-58. Quanzhen is devoted to the practice of *neidan* 內丹 or internal alchemy to achieve the ultimate Daoist goal of immortality. Unlike *waidan* 外丹 or external alchemy, which advocated ingesting elixirs through the manipulation of natural substances composed of metals and minerals, inner alchemy called for spiritual self-cultivation, contending that all necessary ingredients were present within the self. It was widely influenced by Chan Buddhism and promoted the unification of the three teachings of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism.

¹⁴⁵ Stephen Eskildsen, *The Teaching and Practices of the Early Quanzhen Taoist Masters* (Albany: State University of New York, 2004), 4.

sects but the Buddhist schools as well. Development of Quanzhen Daoism appears to have reached its peak when Qiu Chuji 丘處機, also called Qiu Changchun 丘長春 (1148-1227), who fulfilled the role of patriarch in the early thirteenth century, was summoned by the Mongol ruler Genghis Khan (r. 1206-27) in 1222.¹⁴⁶ Qiu's visit to the Mongol court established the Quanzhen order as a main partner of the Mongols, who completed their conquest and destroyed the Jin in 1234, thereby providing the basis for the Quanzhen's rapid rise to the status of most important Daoist sect in the north. A Jin dynasty scholar, Yuan Haowen 元好問 (1190-1257), observed that after Qiu returned to China from his journey, the sect experienced dramatic growth in membership; one-fifth of the population of north China followed Quanzhen Daoism.¹⁴⁷

In contrast to the large body of literary sources that refer to Quanzhen in the Jin period, there is little visual evidence attesting to the popularity of this new Daoist sect. Perhaps the only exception is Cizhou 磁州 ware, a popular ware that was widely produced in the Jin-controlled areas of north China.¹⁴⁸ Today, a number of Cizhou stoneware vessels and objects associated with Quanzhen

¹⁴⁶ The Mongol ruler conferred a host of fiscal and political privileges on Qiu, as well as large powers over all of the religious groups in China. Qiu's travel to the Mongol court is documented by Li Zhichang 李誌常, *Changchun zhenren xiyou ji* 長春真人西遊記 [The western journey of the perfected Changchun] DZ 1429. This account was translated in English. See Arthur Waley, trans., *The Travels of an Alchemist: The Journey of the Taoist Ch'ang-ch'un from China to the Hindukush at the summons of Chingiz Khan* (London: G. Routledge, 1931). For a detailed discussion of Qiu's travel to the Mongol court, see Yao Tao-chung, "Ch'iu Ch'u-chi and Chinggis Khan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40 (1986): 201-19.

¹⁴⁷ Yao, "Buddhism and Daoism under the Chin," 168.

¹⁴⁸ Cizhou ware took its name from a kiln site in Ci county in southern Hebei province. However, the term 'Cizhou' loosely describes popular stoneware made in different sites in north China. It was manufactured at a large number of sites in the Hebei, Henan, Shanxi and Shandong provinces during the Song, Jin, Yuan and Ming periods.

Daoism survive.¹⁴⁹ Among these, we can find a number of sculpted images depicting revered patriarchs — Zhongli Quan, Lü Dongbin and Wang Zhe. In the Wangye Museum, Shenzhen there is a ceramic figure of Zhongli Quan [Fig. 2.9]. The immortal is seated on a trefoil pedestal with one hand resting on his chest. Although the belly is not exposed, his identity can be recognised because of distinct features such as wisps of hair and a long beard. In the same collection, there is a figure of Lü Dongbin [Fig. 2.10].¹⁵⁰ This immortal is seated on a round base with his hands held across the chest in a gesture of greeting. He is depicted



Fig. 2.9 (left) Zhongli Quan and Fig. 2.10 (right) Lü Dongbin. Jin dynasty. Cizhou ware. Height 29.8 cm (left), 27.8 cm (right). Wangye Museum, Shenzhen.

¹⁴⁹ Guo Xuelei 郭學雷, “Cong honglücai ciqi kan Jindai zongjiao yu shehui shenghuo,” 從紅綠彩瓷器看金元宗教與社會生活 [Social life and religion of the Jin dynasty as seen in overglaze polychrome ceramics], in *Jingcai: Jin Yuan honglücai ciqi zhong de shenqi yu shixiang*, 精彩：金元紅綠彩瓷器中的神祇與世相 [Spectacular: deities and secular world in overglaze polychrome-decorated ceramics of the Jin and Yuan dynasties], ed. Shenzhen bowuguan 深圳博物館 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2009), 274, cat. nos. 113-15.

¹⁵⁰ An almost identical but broken figure of this immortal is in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing. For illustration, see Guo, *ibid.*, 278, fig. 54.

as a scholar, dressed in a long robe and wearing a domed cap with streamers falling behind his shoulders, and has a thin moustache and beard.

In addition to Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin, Wang Zhe appears to also be represented among the Cizhou ceramic figures. Two examples possibly representing the Quanzhen founder — one sitting and the other standing — were unearthed in Dezhou, Shandong province [Figs 2.11 and 2.12].¹⁵¹ He is portrayed



Figs 2.11 and 2.12 Wang Zhe. Jin dynasty. Cizhou ware. Private Collection.

somewhat similarly to the image of Lü Dongbin. He wears a thin moustache and beard and an official's square-shaped hat. His official's robe is tied at the waist with a sash, and conceals his two hands held together on the chest. All these stoneware figures are covered with a cream-coloured slip, painted in overglaze

¹⁵¹ Guo, *ibid.*, 278. The excavation details seem to be unknown. They are presently in a private collection in China.

polychrome enamels, and can be dated to the late twelfth century or early thirteenth century.¹⁵²

During the Jin dynasty, not only were the Cizhou kilns the largest and most flourishing ceramics production centres, but they also were the most important producers of small religious figures, as evidenced by the large number of surviving examples. Guo Xuelei's recent study on this particular group has contributed significantly to our understanding of this previously little-studied type of Cizhou ware. According to his findings, the significant development of Cizhou religious figures is associated with Daoism; Daoist images outnumber Buddhist images and constitute the main group of this kind.¹⁵³ It is significant that images of the three Quanzhen patriarchs, in particular, were made of this popular stoneware, which was responsive to the needs and wishes of common people. This clearly demonstrates the prevalence of the new movement of Daoism in north China at the time. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that aside from these figures, which are directly connected with Quanzhen, no other Daoist figures of the Eight Immortals seem to have been produced in the Cizhou kilns. This

¹⁵² Chinese archaeologists outlined four major phases of development of Cizhou wares at the Guantai 觀台 kiln site in Hebei and observed that in phase three (circa 1148-1219), for the first time, overglaze enamel-painted designs on a white slip ground occurred. In addition to Guantai, polychrome Cizhou-type ware with overglaze decoration was also produced at about twenty kilns in the Hebei, Henan, Shanxi and Shandong provinces. Qin Dashu 秦大樹 and Ma Zhongli 馬忠理, "Lun honglücai ciqu," 論紅綠彩瓷器 [Discussion of ceramics with red and green overglaze decoration], *WW* (1997): 48-63; Qin Dashu 秦大樹, *Guantai Cizhou yaozhi* 觀台磁州窯址 [The Cizhou kiln site at Guantai] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1997). In addition, there is a pair of Cizhou polychrome figures of Daoist deities (Emperor Dongyue and Empress Shuming) excavated from a tomb, dated 1203, in Chengwu, Shanxi. Su Ming 蘇鳴, "Chengwu chutu Jindai wucaici ren," 成武出土金代五彩瓷人 [Wucaici human figures of the Jin dynasty unearthed in Chengwu], *WW* 11(1993): 88-9, 106. The emergence and development of Cizhou ceramic figures during the Jin may have been closely related to this new decorative technique, which enabled the detailed depiction of representational forms with details.

¹⁵³ Guo, "Cong honglücai ciqu kan Jindai zongjiao yu shehui shenghuo," 274.

suggests that the group may not yet have been the popular subject of Quanzhen worship during the Jin, although images of the Eight Immortals as a group adorn tomb ceilings and bronze mirrors, as discussed above.

It appears that the association of the Eight Immortals with Quanzhen Daoism had become well established by the advent of the Yuan dynasty, when Mongol patronage enabled the Quanzhen sect to spread rapidly throughout north China during the thirteenth century. The group appears on a mural at the Yonglegong's Chunyang Hall in Shanxi province [Fig. 2.13]. The Yonglegong 永樂宮, the construction of which was completed in 1262, was built by the Quanzhen sect under Mongol sponsorship and devoted to Lü Dongbin.¹⁵⁴ The temple consists of three major halls. The name of each hall relates to the central figures of worship within: the Sanqing Hall for the Three Pure Ones (*Sanqing* 三清); the Chunyang Hall for the patriarchal immortal of Quanzhen, Lü Dongbin; and the Chongyang Hall for the founder of the sect, Wang Zhe, and his six principle disciples.¹⁵⁵ The mural showing "The Eight Immortals Crossing the

¹⁵⁴ The main factors behind this support for Lü Dongbin's shrine appear to have involved the prominence of the Quanzhen movement at the Mongol court as well as efforts on the part of this movement's leaders to promote Lü's cult after he was adopted as the Quanzhen patriarch at the end of the twelfth century. Some legends of Lü Dongbin trace his birth during the Tang dynasty in the vicinity of the original town of Yongle, where a veneration shrine was erected in his name after his death. In the Song period, a shrine of worship was erected at his former residence. After the Quanzhen tradition became widespread in the Jin, Lü was venerated as one of its patriarchs and so the shrine was expanded into a temple. It was rebuilt in 1247 and was gradually enlarged into four halls. Any buildings which existed at the site in Jin times were destroyed by fire in 1244. Just three years later, even before the Mongols established their supremacy over the whole of China, reconstruction began under their sponsorship. It is probably this association with the rulers that gave way to the designation of gong (宮 palace). For more on the Yonglegong, see Paul Katz, "The Site- the Palace of Eternal Joy," in *Images of the Immortal: The Cult of Lü Dongbin at the Palace of Eternal Joy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 24-51.

¹⁵⁵ Wang Zhe accepted a total of seven disciples, who were later referred to as the Seven Perfected Ones (*qizhen* 七真). The seven disciples are: Ma Yu 馬鈺, Tan Chuduan 譚處端, Qiu Chuji 丘處機, Liu Chuxuan 劉處玄, Wang Chuyi 王處一, Hao Datong 郝大通 and Sun Bu'er 孫不二. The latter is the only woman among Wang's seven distinguished disciples, and was not enshrined here.



Fig. 2.13 *The Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea*. Yuan dynasty, completed by 1358. Mural on the north wall of Chunyang Hall, Yonglegong, Shanxi province.

Sea” (*baxian guohai* 八仙過海), completed by 1358, is in the second hall, which celebrates Lü Dongbin.¹⁵⁶ It is placed above the halls’ exit, concluding the wall paintings with Lü Dongbin’s ‘pictorial hagiography’.¹⁵⁷ In this depiction, interestingly, only male figures are shown, and He Xiangyu does not appear.¹⁵⁸

Unlike the north, complete sets of the Eight Immortals do not appear in the south before the Yuan dynasty. Although only three Longquan figures of the Eight Immortals are known today, these late Southern Song ceramic figures are the earliest southern visual evidence of members of the group and show that this theme began to spread in the south, along with the southward dissemination of the northern Quanzhen sect of Daoism by the time of the Mongol unification of

¹⁵⁶ According to Paul Katz, there is no reference to this story in Daoist sources, but it was a subject of both Ming dramas and the novel *Journey to the East*. Katz, *Images of the Immortal*, 188.

¹⁵⁷ The murals in the Chunyang Hall depict 52 scenes from the life of Lü Dongbin. For illustrations, see Jin Weinuo 金維諾 ed., *Yonglegong bihua quanji* 永樂宮壁畫全集 [Complete collection of Yonglegong murals] (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 1997). For a detailed discussion of the Chunyang Hall murals, see Katz, “Text 2—the Murals,” in *Images of the Immortal*, 131-76.

¹⁵⁸ The first six immortals have been identified (from left to right) as Zhongli Qian, Lü Dongbin, Li Tieguai, Cao Guojiu, Zhang Guolao and Lan Caihe. The eighth immortal is Han Xiangzi, while the seventh immortal is probably either Xu Shenweng or Zhang Silang. Katz, *Images of the Immortal*, 189.

China. The growing popularity of the Eight Immortals in south China is also witnessed by *qingbai* porcelain sculptures. In the Southern Song Dynasty Guan Kiln Museum in Hangzhou, there are two *qingbai* figures of seated immortals, apparently two members of the Eight Immortals [Figs 2.14 and 2.15].¹⁵⁹ One figure can possibly be identified as Zhongli Quan because of his distinctive head and facial features. The other figure is dressed in official's robe and hat and carries a tablet-like object in his left hand. This figure might be a portrayal of Cao Guojiu. It is impossible to date these pieces precisely, but based on comparison with other dated *qingbai* religious figures, they can be assigned to the late Southern Song.



Fig. 2.14 (left) Zhongli Quan and Fig. 2.15 (right) Cao Guojiu. Southern Song dynasty. *Qingbai* ware. Southern Song Dynasty Guan Kiln Museum, Hangzhou.

A prime example of dated *qingbai* sculpture of the Southern Song is the figure of a Daoist immortal or sage unearthed in 1986 in Deqing, Zhejiang from a

¹⁵⁹ No further related material was able to be documented.

tomb dated 1268 [Fig. 2.16].¹⁶⁰ The figure is seated on a pedestal with a deer at his right side and holds a *ruyi* in his right hand. He wears a cap topped with a *ruyi* and loose-sleeved robes, secured by a sash tied at the waist. A *qingbai* glaze covers the figure's outer garment and the base, while the remainder of the figure is in biscuit and originally would have been cold painted, a decorative technique that appears to have been developed in Jingdezhen during the Southern Song.¹⁶¹ There is a virtually identical *qingbai* Daoist figure in the Jiangxi Provincial Museum [Fig. 2.17]. That figure was excavated in 1975 in Poyang 鄱陽, Jiangxi from a



Fig. 2.16 (left) Daoist immortal with deer. Southern Song dynasty. *Qingbai* ware. Height 25 cm. Excavated from a tomb dated to 1268 at Deqing, Zhejiang province.
Fig. 2.17 (right) Daoist immortal with crane and deer. Southern Song dynasty. *Qingbai* ware. Height 26 cm. Excavated from a tomb dated to 1268 at Poyang, Jiangxi province. Jiangxi Provincial Museum.

¹⁶⁰ Shi Lan 施蘭, “Deqing chutu de Song Yuan shiqi ciqu,” 德清出土的宋元时期瓷器 [Song and Yuan ceramics excavated at Deqing], *Dongfang bowu* 東方博物 2 (2009): 94-100.

¹⁶¹ A cold painted item is fired in a kiln, typically with a clear glaze. The item is then painted after the firing. The paint is ‘cold’, not fired on, and tends to flake off easily.

tomb similarly dated 1268.¹⁶² Here, the Daoist immortal is accompanied by auspicious animals on each side, a dog and a crane. Interestingly, in his right hand he holds a lotus pod, which is not commonly associated with Daoism.¹⁶³

A Longquan Buddha Figure

Apart from the three celadon Daoist figures excavated in Longquan, there seems to be no other religious figures with documented provenance that can be securely dated to the Southern Song period. However, there is at least one published Buddhist figure from the collection of the Chuzhou Celadon Museum in Lishui, Zhejiang [Fig. 2.18].¹⁶⁴ On the basis of stylistic comparison with the immortal figures from Longquan, this celadon figure can possibly be dated to approximately the same period, that is, the late Southern Song dynasty. This sculpture depicts Shakyamuni Buddha. The Buddha sits on a high, rocky throne with feet crossed on the rocks below, wearing voluminous monastic robes that lie open at the chest. The robes and the *ushinisha* at the centre of the Buddha's head are glazed with a thick, celadon glaze while the rest of the figure and the throne are fired in biscuit. Most interestingly, protruding from his belly, there appear seven small human heads, an unusual iconography for a Buddha. There is

¹⁶² Zhang Bai 張柏 ed., *Zhongguo chutu ciqu quanji*, 14 Jiangxi 中國出土瓷器全集, 14 江西 [Complete collection of ceramic art unearthed in China, Vol. 14 Jiangxi] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2008), pl. 70.

¹⁶³ Similarly, the Yonglegong mural of the Eight Immortals [Fig. 2.13] depicts Lan Caihe with a lotus flower basket, generally associated with Buddhism.

¹⁶⁴ Ye Yingting 葉英挺 ed., *Meizi chuqing: Longquanyao qingci tuji* 梅子初青龍泉窯青瓷圖集 [The green of the prunus: an illustrated survey of Longquan celadons] (Hangzhou: Xiling yinshe chubanshe, 2005), 144, pl. 172.

uncertainty as to the origin and the meaning of the seven human heads. In Ye Yingting's view, they might represent 'Qiqing liuyu' 七情六欲 (seven emotions: joy, anger, sorrow, fear, desire, hate, and love) and six sensory pleasures, although they can be interpreted as various human emotions and desires.¹⁶⁵



Fig. 2.18 Buddha. Southern Song dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 27 cm. Chuzhou Celadon Museum, Lishui.

As discussed above, material evidence of Southern Song Buddhist figures from Longquan is limited and inconclusive. Nonetheless, there are ceramic Buddhist icons that were made outside Zhejiang during this period but found in the region. They are *qingbai* porcelain Guanyin figures produced in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi. To this day, three such examples are known to have been found in Zhejiang. Although small in number, they provide important evidence of the popularity of the worship of Guanyin during the Southern Song that stimulated the development of Longquan sculpture production in the following centuries.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

Three Qingbai Guanyin Figures found in Zhejiang

Of the three *qingbai* figures found in Zhejiang, one figure, in the collection of the Shanghai Museum, is particularly noteworthy because it bears an inscription that dates it to the eleventh year of the Chunyou 淳祐 reign of the Southern Song, which corresponds to 1251 [Fig. 2.19].¹⁶⁶ In this sculpture, the bodhisattva is seated on a base with the right hand palm up. The deity is dressed in long robes and wears a jewelled necklace and bracelet. Her hair is swept back, with coiled tresses falling to the mantle on her shoulders, and the head is crowned by a diadem bearing an Amitabha figure. There is an *urna* mark on the forehead. The figure has a *qingbai* glaze on the edge of the outer robe. Pigments adhering to the unglazed areas suggest that it originally was cold painted.



Fig. 2.19 Guanyin. Southern Song dynasty, dated 1251. *Qingbai* ware. Height 25.6 cm. Shanghai Museum.

¹⁶⁶ A similar figure is in the Jiyuanshanfang 吉緣山房 Collection. This *qingbai* Guanyin figure is being displayed on the web gallery of the collection: <http://jiyuanshanfang.com/gallery>, Fig. 13.

Furthermore, the excavation of a Southern Song tomb in Quzhou 衢州, Zhejiang has unearthed a *qingbai* figure of Guanyin [Fig. 2.20]. The tomb



Fig. 2.20 Guanyin. Southern Song dynasty. *Qingbai* ware. Height without base 17 cm. Excavated from the tomb of Shi Shengzu (d. 1274) at Quzhou, Zhejiang province. Quzhou Museum.

belonged to Shi Shengzu 史繩祖 and his wife and dates to the tenth year of the Xianchun 咸淳 reign, which corresponds to 1274.¹⁶⁷ Since the sculpture is badly damaged, it is difficult to reconstruct the actual image. Nonetheless, judging from surviving parts of the figure, it seems most likely that the bodhisattva was originally seated on a rocky throne in *rajalilasana*, the pose of royal ease with one leg hanging and the other raised to allow her arms to rest on her raised knee. The lotus projecting from the rocks below and the posture suggest a representation of Guanyin seated on Mount Potalaka. Like the Shanghai Guanyin, the bodhisattva wears a beaded necklace and an elaborate crown containing the image of

¹⁶⁷ Quzhoushi wenguanhui 衢州市文管會, “Zhejiang Quzhoushi Nan Song mu chutu qiwu,” 浙江衢州市南宋墓出土器物 [Artefacts excavated from a Southern Song tomb in Quzhou, Zhejiang], *KG* 11 (1983): 1004-21.

Amitabha Buddha, while long tresses fall to the shoulders on either side. The rocky pedestal is covered with a *qingbai* glaze, and the figure itself is biscuit fired and would have been cold painted.

Another Guanyin figure with a *qingbai* glaze was unearthed in 1978 from a Song dynasty well in Changzhou 常州, present-day Jiangsu province [Fig. 2.21].¹⁶⁸ Here, the bodhisattva sits on a rocky throne with two hands lying on her



Fig. 2.21 Guanyin. Southern Song dynasty. *Qingbai* ware. Height 25.4 cm. Excavated at Changzhou, Jiangsu province. Changzhou Museum.

lap in the *dhyana mudra* of meditation. To the left of Guanyin stands a water bottle and to the right is a bird-like figure, both of which have been restored. A lotus between the legs of the deity rests on the rockwork base, which suggests Guanyin's location on Mount Potalaka. This sculpture bears similar stylistic features to the two previous *qingbai* Guanyin, such as hair, robes and beaded

¹⁶⁸ Zhang ed., *Zhongguo chutu ciqi quanji*, 7 Jiangsu Shanghai, pl. 137.

ornaments. The deity's outer robes and rocky pedestal are covered with a *qingbai* glaze, whereas other areas are biscuit fired.

As discussed in Chapter One, ceramic figures of Guanyin were not new to the Southern Song, and in Zhejiang they were produced during the Northern Song, as attested by the celadon example of the Baixiang Pagoda [Fig. 1.40]. Nevertheless, these three works depict 'new Guanyin' images; they bear feminine and indigenous characteristics that clearly differ from earlier images of the bodhisattva. In Buddhism, it is believed that all bodhisattvas are asexual. However, some of the Sanskrit texts, such as the Lotus Sutra and Indian accounts, designate Avalokiteshvara as male.¹⁶⁹ Accordingly, Avalokiteshvara was traditionally depicted as a handsome, young prince in India, Tibet and Southeast Asia, where the bodhisattva was closely identified with royalty. Likewise, in China, Avalokiteshvara was perceived as a male deity and was so portrayed until the late Tang dynasty. Indeed, many Guanyin paintings dating from the ninth and tenth centuries found at Dunhuang 敦煌 depict the bodhisattva with a moustache.¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, by the advent of the Song dynasty, the bodhisattva underwent a profound sexual transformation from the masculine Avalokiteshvara to the feminine Guanyin. Of all the imported Buddhist deities, Avalokiteshvara was the only one who succeeded in becoming a genuine Chinese goddess. As a unique Chinese phenomenon, this metamorphosis has long intrigued scholars.

¹⁶⁹ Diana Y. Paul, *Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in Mahayana Tradition* (Berkeley, Calif: Asian Humanities Press, 1979), 249.

¹⁷⁰ For illustrations, see Zhang Wenbin ed., *Dunhuang: A Centennial Commemoration of the Discovery of the Cave Library* (Beijing: Morning Glory Publishers; Chicago: Art Media Resources, 2000).

The process of domestication and feminisation of Guanyin can probably be observed best through indigenous iconographies. Starting in the late Tang, the Chinese began to create new Guanyin images that did not originate in the Buddhist canonical scriptures, but instead bore distinctively Chinese characteristics. According to Chün-fang Yü, four feminine forms of Guanyin, each with a very Chinese biography and a new iconography, appeared in different parts of China.¹⁷¹ They were Princess Miaoshan 妙善 in Xiangshan 香山, Henan province, Mr Ma's Wife, (Malangfu 馬郎婦) or Guanyin with a Fish Basket (Yulan Guanyin 魚籃觀音), in Shaanxi province, White-Robed Guanyin (Baiyi Guanyin 白衣觀音) in Hangzhou, and Guanyin of the South Sea (Nanhai Guanyin 南海觀音) on Mount Putuo 普陀山, both in Zhejiang province.

It could be argued that of the four human representations of Guanyin, the White-Robed Guanyin became the most popular in the Song dynasty. Although her origin has long been a topic of scholarly debate, extant visual evidence shows that her image was probably the earliest female manifestation of Guanyin in China. She is typically depicted wearing a long, flowing white robe, sometimes with its hood covering her head. One of the oldest depictions of this Guanyin with a clearly feminine appearance occurs in the two carved images of the bodhisattva gracing the entrance to the Yanxia Grotto 煙霞洞 in Hangzhou, which can be dated to the tenth century [Fig. 2.22].¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Chün-fang Yü, "Feminine Images of Kuan-yin in Post-T'ang China," *Journal of Chinese Religions* (1990): 61-89.

¹⁷² Chun-fang Yü has noted that several White-Robed Guanyin paintings were attributed to the Tang painter Wu Daozi 吳道子. However, this attribution is not always reliable. Yü, *ibid.*, 72.



Fig. 2.22 White-Robed Guanyin. Five Dynasties period. Yanxia Grotto, Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

The appearance of the White-Robed Guanyin in Hangzhou during the tenth century may not have been mere coincidence. It seems to have been associated closely with her legend, which was anchored in the Upper Tianzhu Monastery 上天竺寺 (currently also called Faxi Temple 法喜寺) in Hangzhou, an important Guanyin pilgrimage site. The Chronicle of the Upper Tianzhu (*Shang Tianzhu zhi* 上天竺志) records a story in which Guanyin allegedly appeared in the form of a woman in white in the dream of Qian Liu 錢鏐 (r. 907-32), the founder of the Wuyue Kingdom, promising to protect him and his descendants if he was compassionate and averse to killing. She indicated that he could find her on Mount Tianzhu in Hangzhou. Later, after he became king, he dreamed of the same lady, who asked him for a place to stay and agreed to be the tutelary deity of his kingdom. Upon enquiries, the king found out that the only White-Robed Guanyin image was enshrined in the Tianzhu Monastery. Hence, he gave it his patronage

and established it as the Tianzhu Kanjingyuan 天竺看經院, later renamed the Upper Tianzhu Monastery.¹⁷³

During the Song period the cult of the White-Robed Guanyin grew in popularity, and her image was more often portrayed in various visual art forms. The iconography of Guanyin was particularly popular among literati and became a favourite subject of the so-called Chan / Zen paintings. Chün-fang Yü believes that the White-Robed Guanyin represents the teaching of emptiness of the Heart Sutra and symbolises the serenity during Chan / Zen meditation, hence making her an icon favoured by monks and lay believers as a symbol of Buddhist awakening.¹⁷⁴ One of her best known portrayals is currently located at Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, a famous Zen temple in Kyoto. It was painted by Mu Qi 牧溪, a monk-painter who lived near Hangzhou in the early thirteenth century [Fig. 2.23]. He



Fig. 2.23 Mu Qi. *White-Robed Guanyin, Crane and Gibbons*. Southern Song dynasty. Hanging scroll; ink on silk. Daitoku-ji, Kyoto.

¹⁷³ This account is from Chun-fang Yü's description in *Kuan-yin*, 182. It is originally from *Shang Tianzhusi zhi* 上天竺寺志 [Gazetteer of Upper Tianzhu Monastery], compiled by Shi Guangbin 釋廣賓, in the Ming dynasty.

¹⁷⁴ Yü, *Kuan-yin*, 127.

depicted Guanyin sitting on the banks of a river, draped in pure white and focused completely on her meditation. Several of Chan / Zen-associated paintings were taken to Japan during the period and have been preserved in Japanese Zen temples.

Chan was arguably the dominant form of elite monastic Buddhism in the Song, enjoying the considerable benefits of imperial patronage. The prevalence of Chan Buddhism was not limited to the south; at the same time, Chan was the most important of all Buddhist schools in the north, controlled by the alien dynasties.¹⁷⁵ It seems that the White-Robed Guanyin was also gaining popularity among Chan Buddhist circles in north China. Perhaps the most notable example of her image found in the north is a Southern Song *qingbai* porcelain figure excavated in 1964 in the foundations of Pagoda No. 1 at Wayao 瓦窯 in Fengtai 豐台, southwest of Beijing [Fig. 2.24].¹⁷⁶ During the Jin, Yuan and Ming periods, the Wayao area was an important Buddhist site and served as a subtemple of the Chan sect's Daqingshou Monastery 大庆寿寺, located in the city of Beijing. In this sculpture, the White-Robed Guanyin sits in an attitude of contemplation, with legs folded and hands lying on her lap beneath long robes, like Mu Qi's Guanyin. The mantle frames the head, and the hair is crowned by an elaborate diadem bearing an Amitabha figure. The *urna* mark of sanctity appears on her forehead, her eyes are

¹⁷⁵ Most of the body of Jin dynasty source material concerning Buddhism was written after 1162 and deals with the Chan school. Yao, "Buddhism and Daoism under the Chin," 147.

¹⁷⁶ Zhang ed., *Zhongguo chutu ciqi quanji*, 1 Beijing, pl. 27. A virtually identical *qingbai* figure of the White-Robed Guanyin was recently sold at Christie's Hong Kong (*Important Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, 1 June 2011, lot 3726). Another similar but larger figure of this bodhisattva is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (48.114a, b). The Museum attributes the sculpture to the Song but it seems closer to the Yuan.

closed and her lips bear a slight smile. The borders of her outer robe are covered with a *qingbai* glaze.



Fig. 2.24 (left) Guanyin. Southern Song dynasty. *Qingbai* ware. Height 29.5 cm. Excavated from the foundations of Wayao Pagoda at Fengtai, Beijing. Capital Museum, Beijing.

Fig. 2.25 (right) Guanyin. Jin dynasty. Cizhou ware. Height 32.2 cm. Excavated at Tianjin. Tianjin Museum.

It is interesting that a Jingdezhen ceramic figure that was made in the south was unearthed in the north, where large volumes of religious figures were being made in the Cizhou kilns. However, as discussed earlier, Buddhist figures are fewer in number than Daoist figures, and in particular, Guanyin icons dated to the Jin and Yuan are scarce. More notably, unlike the Jingdezhen work, which represents the bodhisattva as undeniably feminine, surviving Cizhou Guanyin figures sport moustaches, as shown in the figure unearthed in Tianjin [Fig. 2.25].¹⁷⁷ This might suggest that aside from small Chan / Zen communities, the cult of White-Robed Guanyin was not yet widespread among the Chinese in the

¹⁷⁷ Zhang ed., *Zhongguo chutu ciqi quanji*, 2 *Tianjin*, pl.16.

north. Although most of the surviving images of the White-Robed Guanyin from the Southern Song are found in Chan Buddhist contexts, the popularity of the White-Robed Guanyin was not confined to Chan believers. The cult of Guanyin was widespread. There were diverse aspects of her devotion that appealed to people from all strata of society. The prominence of the Guanyin cult and the deity's new feminine manifestation in China, especially in the Lower Yangzi region, are found in many miracle tales. Hong Mai's *Yijian zhi* [Records of listeners], mentioned in Chapter One, included several anecdotes from a wide range of social contexts about the efficacy of the White-Robed Guanyin.¹⁷⁸

Hence, it is no wonder that the majority of *qingbai* porcelain Guanyin figures surviving today represent the bodhisattva as a lady in a white robe. This clearly demonstrates the intriguing transformation of Avalokiteshvara into a representative Chinese goddess that occurred since the Song dynasty, along with increasingly numbers of portrayals of this bodhisattva in the feminine form. The three *qingbai* Guanyin figures found in Zhejiang not only testify to the prevalence of Guanyin worship in the region but, more importantly, provide material evidence of the popularity of the cult of this specific feminine Guanyin image during the Southern Song. This is likely closely related to the fact that the Upper Tianzhu Monastery, which became associated with the legend of the White-Robed Guanyin in the tenth century, rose to national pre-eminence as the main pilgrimage site dedicated to Guanyin in China when Hangzhou became the capital city of the Southern Song dynasty.

¹⁷⁸ Hong Mai 洪邁, *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 [Record of the listener] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981).

Longquan and Jingdezhen

Because of the increasing popularity of the Guanyin cult in Zhejiang, it is surprising that Southern Song Guanyin figures were not made in Longquan, although several Jingdezhen porcelain models are known today and furthermore most of them have been found in the Zhejiang region. To my knowledge, there are no examples of documented Longquan figures of this bodhisattva attributed to the Southern Song dynasty. One possible reason for this absence might be the green-colour of the Longquan glaze, which is not suitable to depict a Guanyin in white robes. Instead, perhaps *qingbai* ware, which has a pure white porcelain body with a bluish white glaze, was possibly thought more appropriate for the representation of Guanyin.

While only a handful of Longquan religious figures survive from the Southern Song period, several Jingdezhen religious figures are recorded in Zhejiang. As discussed in Chapter One, *qingbai* ware developed in Jiangxi province during the Northern Song period. Jingdezhen grew into the biggest porcelain-production centre in south China by the Southern Song period, as attested by rich archaeological findings in China and large quantities discovered abroad. Interestingly, out of the ceramic finds unearthed from a Southern Song well in Shaoxing in northern Zhejiang, 54.7 percent were *qingbai* ware while only 14 percent were Longquan ware.¹⁷⁹ Additionally, only very small quantities of Longquan celadon have been excavated from Southern Song-dated tombs, while

¹⁷⁹ Oriental Ceramic Society of the Philippines, *Chinese and South-East Asian White Ware Found in the Philippines* (Singapore; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 8.

qingbai ware has appeared in vast quantities. According to Li Zhiyan, the same phenomenon appears in the archaeological sites of other regions, such as Suzhou and Yangzhou in present-day Jiangsu province.¹⁸⁰ This suggests that the volume of Jingdezhen's output was far greater and / or that Jingdezhen ware was more popular than that of Longquan during this period.

Furthermore, the finely-modelled *qingbai* figures found in Zhejiang indicate that Jingdezhen excelled in producing both large quantities and good quality of sculpted religious images at a time when production of such items was just beginning in Longquan. It appears that these biscuit- and *qingbai*-glazed sculptures gave impetus to Longquan's production of religious figures with similar decoration: exposed biscuit and celadon glazes (*qingyou luotai* 青釉露胎).¹⁸¹ As demonstrated by the four Southern Song Longquan figures, the areas of exposed flesh, such as hands, face and neck, are left unglazed, while the remainder is covered with a clear, celadon glaze. The unglazed sections are burned a pinkish-tan colour due to the reoxidation of iron in the exposed body material at the end of the firing. This contrasts with the green-glazed sections, creating the illusion of flesh and suggesting harmonious, contrasting textures. This combination is arguably more noticeable in ceramic figures from Longquan, producing similar but more striking effects than their Jingdezhen counterparts. These effects would distinguish Longquan during the succeeding Yuan period, when the local production of religious figures began to burgeon.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 8.

¹⁸¹ The technique of exposed biscuit and glaze was first applied to the decoration of Han figures; see Fig. 1.13.

Conclusion

The three Daoist figures unearthed at the Longquan Dayao kiln site are the earliest substantial evidence of Longquan ceramic religious figures and demonstrate the well-established production of this form by the late Southern Song period. The figures include representations of some individual members of the Eight Immortals and show the growing popularity of the group in the south parallel to the southward spread of Quanzhen Daosim. The inclusion in the Longquan group of Han Xiangzi and the female immortal, He Xiangu, is significant, suggesting that it was probably in the south that some of their members other than the two Quanzhen patriarchs (Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin) became the popular subjects of veneration.

In addition to the Longquan figures, a number of *qingbai* porcelain figures from Jingdezhen are found in Southern Song contexts at Zhejiang, indicating an increasing demand for small ceramic religious figures in the region during the time. In particular, the three Guanyin figures are notable in that they represent new Guanyin images bearing distinctive Chinese characteristics. They portray the earliest Chinese feminine form of the bodhisattva — the White-Robed Guanyin, whose legend and cult were closely associated with the Upper Tianzhu Monastery in Hangzhou. Although celadon Guanyin figures are absent from the Southern Song period, as we will see in next chapters, the local cult of Guanyin plays a significant role in the growth and expansion of religious figure production at Longquan during the subsequent Yuan and Ming periods.

CHAPTER THREE

The Development of Yuan Dynasty Longquan Religious Sculptures

Introduction

In 1271, Khubilai Khan (r. 1260-94) established the Yuan 元 dynasty (1271-1368), with its capital in Dadu 大都 (currently Beijing 北京). In 1276, the Mongols captured the Southern Song capital of Hangzhou, and by 1279 they controlled all of China. With the unification of the country under the Mongols, the market for Longquan wares extended to all parts of China. Furthermore, the export market that was established during the Song dynasty continued to expand during the Yuan dynasty.

Throughout this period, Longquan grew rapidly and became the biggest competitor of Jingdezhen. Many new kilns were founded in the Longquan area, and production was on an industrial scale; the number of kilns rose to three hundred, extending from Dayao, Jincun and Xikou in southern Longquan eastward to the middle and lower reaches of the Ou River and the upper reaches of the Songxi River.¹⁸² Celadons from Zhejiang were sold throughout China and shipped abroad in vast quantities, reaching markets from Korea, Japan and Southeast Asia to India, the Middle East and as far as Eastern Africa. Celadon sherds have been discovered at almost every site connected with sea trade from

¹⁸² Fung Ping Shan Museum, *Greenware from Zhejiang* (Hong Kong: Fung Ping Shan Museum, 1993), 24-5 (in Chinese), 47 (in English).

Yuan China.¹⁸³ All the finds clearly show the impressive distribution and marketing of Longquan wares during the Mongol era. It could be argued that Longquan ware was the most extensively exported Chinese ceramic wares at that time. To satisfy the need of the expanded market and the demand of a varied body of consumers, Longquan kilns manufactured vessels and objects in larger numbers and in greater variety than in the previous Song period. In parallel, the production of religious figures in Longquan began to expand and as we shall see in this chapter, several pieces of this type are recorded in Yuan-dynasty contexts; significantly, the consumers and uses of these objects were not limited to the Zhejiang region.

A Group of Longquan Buddhist Figures Unearthed in Beijing

A group of celadon figures in the collection of the Capital Museum in Beijing are probably among the best-known Longquan religious sculptures from the Yuan period. The group consists of three small Buddhist figures that were reportedly unearthed in 1966 in a Yuan-dynasty residential site in the Changping 昌平 District, located in the suburbs of northwest Beijing, the capital of the dynasty, then called Dadu.¹⁸⁴ Despite difficulties in dating them with certainty and clarifying their excavation context, the three figures are nevertheless important

¹⁸³ For a brief discussion of Longquan celadons exported along the maritime trade route during the medieval period, see John Carswell, *Blue & White: Chinese Porcelain around the World* (London: British Museum Press, 2000), 107-15.

¹⁸⁴ According to Pei Yajing 裴雅静, curator of ceramics at the Capital Museum, there is no official excavation report about these artefacts. However, she confirmed that all three figures were found together at the same site. Personal communication with Pei Yajing, 18 December 2012.

works that were found outside Zhejiang, demonstrating the wide distribution of Longquan religious figures throughout China after the Song dynasty. Two of them have been frequently featured in various publications as significant ceramic finds from Yuan-period Beijing. However, the identification of these figures has often been inaccurate, and more surprisingly, the three Longquan figures have seldom been discussed together, that is, as a set.¹⁸⁵

The first figure of this group represents the Buddha, probably Shakyamuni [Fig. 3.1]. He sits on a lotus throne raised on a hexagonal pedestal base, with his



Fig. 3.1 Buddha Shakyamuni. Yuan dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 25.4 cm. Excavated at Changping District of Beijing. Capital Museum, Beijing.

legs folded and his hands lying on his lap in *dhyana mudra* (palm facing upward with the fingers extended). The Buddha wears a loose robe open at the chest,

¹⁸⁵ This may be because only two of the three figures were published in the Capital Museum's catalogue. Shoudu bowuguan 首都博物館, *Shoudu bowuguan cang ci xuan* 首都博物館藏瓷選 [Selected ceramics from the Capital Museum] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1991), pls 75, 76. In addition, publications on the ceramic artefacts unearthed in Beijing do not include the third figure. For example, see Mei Ninghua 梅寧華 et al., *Beijing wenwu jingcui daxi: xia, taoci juan* 北京文物精粹大系: 下, 陶瓷卷 [Gems of Beijing cultural relics series, ceramics II] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2004), pls 70, 71; Zhang ed., *Zhongguo chutu ciqu quanji, I Beijing*, pls 106, 107.

revealing the swastika 卐 or *wan* symbol above the *dhoti*, and falling symmetrically in folds around his legs and over the base. His placid face with downcast eyes and an *urna* in the centre of the forehead is framed by elongated earlobes and a mass of curly hair that covers his head. The figure is covered in a bluish-green glaze, except for the face, chest and hands, which are reserved in the biscuit and burnt to an orange colour in the firing.¹⁸⁶

The next figure portrays a bodhisattva [Fig. 3.2]. The deity sits with his legs crossed on the back of a standing lion and his hands laid one above the other, palm upward, on his lap. He wears a long, plain mantle over a low-fronted brocaded robe, with a high headdress with ribbons hanging symmetrically on both



Fig. 3.2 Manjushri (Wenshu). Yuan dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 24 cm. Excavated at Changping District of Beijing. Capital Museum, Beijing.

¹⁸⁶ There are several comparable examples to the present figure of Buddha. A celadon Buddha figure once in the collection of Charles Russell (and later of Carl Kempe) was recently sold by Sotheby's London (*Masterpieces of Chinese Precious Metalwork, Early Gold and Silver, Early Chinese White, Green and Black Wares*, 14 May 2008, lot 332). Another Longquan figure of Buddha, exhibiting an almost identical iconography and style is known in the collection of Mr and Mrs Chia. Published in Julian Thompson, "Chinese Celadons: The Collection of Mr and Mrs Jack Chia," in *Arts of Asia*, November/December, 1993, 68, fig 12.

sides and strings of jewels on his breast. The face, neck and hands of the bodhisattva and the eyes, jaw and claws of the lion are unglazed. The iconography of the figure sitting on a lion is a key to identifying this deity. Two bodhisattvas are suggested by the fact that they, at times, ride lions. One is Manjushri or Wenshu 文殊 in Chinese, the Embodiment of Transcendent Wisdom, who is frequently shown on this mount holding a *ruyi* sceptre.¹⁸⁷ The other is Avalokiteshvara, who sits on a lion in the Simhanada form, known as Avalokiteshvara of the Lion's Roar (Shihou Guanyin 獅吼觀音). In both, the roar symbolizes the intensity of the moment of enlightenment.

In many publications, this celadon bodhisattva figure has been identified as Guanyin since it was so labelled by the Capital Museum.¹⁸⁸ A virtually



Fig. 3.3 Simhanada Avalokiteshvara (Shihou Guanyin).
Ming dynasty. Wood with pigment. Height 107 cm.
Metropolitan Museum of Art (2000.270).

¹⁸⁷ A Longquan figure of Manjushri, which can be identified by a *ruyi* sceptre, is in the collection of the Chuzhou Celadon Museum. See Ye ed., *Meizi chuqing*, pl. 174.

¹⁸⁸ Shoudu bowuguan, *Shoudu bowuguan cang ci xuan*, 102, fig. 75.

identical Longquan figure is in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (C. 128-1911), and it is also described as Guanyin and, in this case, dated to the Ming dynasty by the museum. Nevertheless, in the Simhanada manifestation of Guanyin, the bodhisattva is usually depicted as riding sidewise, and the lion is in the recumbent pose [Fig. 3.3], suggesting that the Longquan bodhisattva is unlikely to be Guanyin. The identity of this figure can be, indeed, more confidently confirmed by the examination of the third figure of the Beijing group.

Unlike the two aforementioned Buddhist figures, the last Longquan figure from Beijing is little known, as it has repeatedly been omitted from publications [Fig. 3.4].¹⁸⁹ However, the identification of this figure is crucial, for it assists in clarifying the other two celadon Buddhist images. From the fact that the figure is



Fig. 3.4 Samantabhadra (Puxian). Yuan dynasty. Longquan ware. Excavated at Changping District of Beijing. Capital Museum, Beijing.

¹⁸⁹ The present figure is, however, displayed on a permanent basis at the Capital Museum's Ceramics Gallery.

seated on an elephant, it is clear that the deity represents the bodhisattva Samantabhadra, the Embodiment of Universal Goodness, known as Puxian 普賢 in Chinese. He is almost always depicted on a single- or many-headed (white) elephant, a sacred animal in Buddhism, symbolising strength, wisdom and dignity.¹⁹⁰ In addition to Puxian's identifying mount, the elephant, the figure shares the same iconographic and stylistic details exhibited by the previous figure. The bodhisattva is seated in a meditative pose, with his hands resting on his lap and his palms facing up. He is dressed in long, flowing robes, a beaded necklace and an elaborate diadem with guards extending from the neck. The thick glaze of a rich olive-green tone leaves the tusks and eyes of the elephant unglazed in biscuit, while the face and hands of the figure are burnt brick-red in the firing.

In the Chinese Buddhist pantheon, Puxian is commonly partnered with Wenshu, who is usually portrayed riding a lion. The two bodhisattvas appear singly, since they are venerated as individual deities, but they are more frequently paired as 'mirror images'. It is therefore probable that extant Longquan ceramic figures of these bodhisattvas were enshrined on altars either independently or jointly. Puxian and Wenshu are in fact among the most popular bodhisattvas alongside Guanyin and became the focus of their own cults in China. These three

¹⁹⁰ A number of celadon figures depicting this bodhisattva are known today. The Shanghai Museum has an almost identical example to the Capital Museum figure; see Zhongguo gutaoci xuehui 中國古陶瓷學會 ed., *Longquanyao yanjiu* 龍泉窯研究 [The research of Longquan kiln] (Beijing: Gugong chubanshe, 2011), 113, fig.9. Another similar exemplar apparently dating to the fourteenth century was formerly in the Edward Chow Collection. The piece was sold by Sotheby's Hong Kong (*The Edward T. Chow Collection, Part Two: Early Chinese Ceramics and Ancient Bronzes*, 16 December, 1980, lot 327). Another example of this bodhisattva figure possibly dating to the early Ming dynasty is in the British Museum (Franks. 1513). Published in Harrison-Hall, *Catalogue of Late Yuan and Ming Ceramics in the British Museum*, 501-02, pl. 16:97.

bodhisattvas are traditionally referred to as ‘Three Great Beings’ (*Sandashi* 三大師).¹⁹¹ In this new grouping of the three bodhisattvas, Wenshu and Puxian appear in triads flanking Guanyin; Wenshu is to the left and Puxian to the right. A celadon sculpture of Guanyin in the collection of the Hetjens Museum in Düsseldorf suggests that such sets might have been produced in Longquan [Fig. 3.5]. The Guanyin figure shows an affinity with the Beijing examples. The



Fig. 3.5 Guanyin. Yuan to Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 26.5 cm. Hetjen Museum (V 59).

bodhisattva is seated on a lotus throne, which is raised on an hexagonal pedestal base, with her hands resting on her lap in a meditation *mudra*. She wears loose robes open at the chest to reveal a bejewelled necklace, and her hair is surmounted by a large tiara. Her face, chest and hands are left unglazed, whereas the

¹⁹¹ According to Chün-fang Yü, the term *Sandashi* was used only after the Song dynasty, and its first mention appears in an early fourteenth-century gazetteer of Ningbo. Chün-fang Yü, “P’u-t’o Shan: Pilgrimage and the Creation of the Chinese Potalaka,” in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, ed. Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 190. The icons of the ‘Three Great Beings’ became popular from the Song dynasty onward, but it was during the Ming dynasty that they were enshrined in more and more temples together.

remainder is celadon glazed. Considering the iconography and style of the sculpture, it seems very likely that this Guanyin figure was once enshrined with figures of the other two bodhisattvas, Wenshu and Puxian, rather than independently.

Wenshu and Puxian are also considered important acolytes of Shakyamuni Buddha and hence are also found in triads. The two bodhisattvas are often paired as attendants on either side of the Buddha instead of Guanyin, with Wenshu on his lion representing the essence of wisdom and Puxian, mounted on an elephant, representing the application of wisdom actively benefiting the world. The fact that the three Longquan figures were found together at the same site in Beijing, coupled with the fact that they are of a similar format, style and size suggests that in all probability they formed a set — the trinity of Shakyamuni, Wenshu and Puxian. This particular Buddha triad seems to have been most closely associated with the Lotus Sutra, which is particularly important in Tiantai 天台 tradition.¹⁹² A hanging scroll in the collection of the Jobodai-in Temple 成菩提院 in Japan, datable to the Jin-Yuan dynasty, shows Shakyamuni flanked by the bodhisattvas

¹⁹² The Flower Garland Sutra or the Avatamsaka Sutra (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經) provides the scriptural basis for images of a Buddha attended by the bodhisattvas Manjushri, riding a lion and by Samantabhadra, riding an elephant. This text was influential in the development of East Asian Buddhist thought, especially in the formation of the Huayan 華嚴 order, which flourished in China during the Tang dynasty and spread from there to Korea and Japan. After the tenth-century revival of the Tiantai 天台 tradition, which is based on the Lotus Sutra and extols the virtues and understanding of the same two bodhisattvas, the triad consisting of a Buddha, Manjushri and Samantabhadra became an important icon in both Huayan and Tiantai practices. It should be noted that the Flower Garland Sutra identifies the Buddha as the celestial Buddha Vairocana and not as the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni. It has been suggested that Vairocana is understood as the transcendent form of the temporal Shakyamuni, and it is not impossible that the Buddha in such triads was understood to symbolize both divinities. It is also likely that the contemporary understanding of this Buddha reflects the incorporation of the triad into the Tiantai tradition, which focuses on Shakyamuni. Denise Patry Leidy and Donna K. Strahan, *Wisdom Embodied: Chinese Buddhist and Daoist Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 133, note 1.

Wenshu and Puxian at the top [Fig. 3.6]. The Buddha is seated in meditation on the large lotus in the centre. He is supported by a high octagonal throne and holds his right hand in a gesture indicative of teaching, while his left hand rests in his lap. Wenshu takes a position on the Buddha's left carrying a *ruyi* sceptre, and Puxian is on his right and holds a lotus stem with a book resting on the blossom. The gold inscription in the centre of the foreground pillar explicitly states that the painting is based on the Lotus Sutra.



Fig. 3.6 *Buddha Shakyamuni with Manjushri and Samantabhadra*. Jin or Yuan dynasty. Hanging scroll; ink, colour and gold on silk. 109.3 x 53.3 cm. Jobodai-in, Maibara, Shiga Prefecture.

Triads such as this, consisting of Shakyamuni flanked by Wenshu and Puxian, appear to have been most popular in north China during the Jin period. One of the oldest visual representations of the triad is found on the east wall of the Manjushri Hall at the Yanshan Temple 岩山寺, which was built in 1158 in Shanxi

province.¹⁹³ Such groups are also known through smaller scale representations in ceramic. A group of three polychrome Buddhist sculptures that might have constituted a triad, attributed to the Linshui 臨水 kiln of Cizhou, was excavated in 1972 from a hoard in the Fengfeng Mining District in Handan 邯鄲, Hebei province [Figs 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9].¹⁹⁴ The Buddha is seated on a lotus throne raised



Fig. 3.7 (left) Samantabhadra (Puxian), Fig. 3.8 (centre) Buddha Shakyamuni and Fig. 3.9 (right) Manjushri (Wenshu). Jin dynasty. Cizhou ware. Height 41 cm (left), 61.5 cm (centre), 42.6 cm (right). Excavated from a hoard at Handan, Heibei province. Handan Museum.

on a hexagonal pedestal base. Wenshu is seated with his legs crossed, holding a lotus sceptre on the back of a lion and accompanied by an attendant. Similarly, Puxian is seated in a cross-legged fashion, holding a *ruyi* sceptre and mounted on

¹⁹³ The mural was painted between 1158 and 1167. Reproduced in James C.Y. Watt ed., *The World of Khubilai Khan: Chinese Art in the Yuan Dynasty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 89, fig. 117.

¹⁹⁴ They were found together with *tianwang* and other Buddhist figures who most likely represent the historical disciples of the Buddha, including Ananda and Kashyapa. Qin Dashu 秦大树 et al., “Handanshi Fengfeng kuangqu chutu de liangpi honglücai ciqu,” 邯鄲市峰峰礦區出土的兩批紅綠彩瓷器 [Overglazed polychrome wares unearthed in the Fengfeng mining district, Handan], *WW* 10 (1997): 30-5.

the back of an elephant. He is also accompanied by an attendant. It appears that in the north, a number of similar triads dating to the late twelfth and early thirteenth century were produced at the Cizhou kilns.¹⁹⁵ This would support the already widespread importance of the Shakyamuni triad image in the Jin. Furthermore, the fact that Longquan ceramic figures of the historic Buddha, Wenshu and Puxian have been unearthed together as a set at Beijing would suggest that small sculpted images of this particular Buddhist group continued to have been sought-after in the north after the Jin dynasty. It is particularly noteworthy that southern celadon figures were discovered in north China, where the Cizhou kilns were major producers of ceramic wares. Although the Cizhou kilns continued to manufacture many types of wares throughout the Yuan dynasty, the production appears to have been much reduced in comparison to the flourishing of the preceding Jin dynasty. More importantly, surviving religious sculptures are scarce from this period. It would be reasonable to assume that the celadon Buddhist sculptures unearthed in Beijing indicate that Longquan products became extensively distributed and consumed outside Zhejiang in Yuan China and, to a certain extent, they may have dominated the northern market for this type of objects. Longquan religious figures also appeared in export contexts, perhaps for the first time in the history of China's ceramic religious sculpture.

¹⁹⁵ See Shenzhen bowuguan ed., *Jingcai*, pls 1, 2 and 3. Also see *ibid.*, 270-1, figs 17, 18 and 20.

A Group of Longquan Religious Figures Recovered from the Sinan Wreck

Along with the three Buddhist figures from Beijing, the group of celadon figures from the Sinan wreck is the most prominent example of Yuan dynasty Longquan ceramic sculpture. They not only demonstrate the flourishing sculpture tradition at the Longquan kilns in the Yuan dynasty but also provide intriguing evidence of some of the earliest ceramic ‘religious’ figures that were shipped abroad. The Sinan wreck was a merchant vessel laden with diverse trade goods, mostly of Chinese origin; it had apparently foundered during a storm while en route from Ningbo 寧波, China, to Japan in the summer of 1323 [Map 3].¹⁹⁶ The discovery of the Sinan wreck was a major archaeological discovery of historical significance, shedding unprecedented light on East Asian maritime trade in the early fourteenth century.¹⁹⁷ In the field of Chinese ceramics, the Sinan wreck is particularly important as the wreckage site yielded a wide variety of ceramic wares amounting to approximately 22,000 pieces, thereby contributing a great deal of new and exciting information regarding China’s ceramics trade in the region during the

¹⁹⁶ The date of the Sinan wreck has been determined by recovered wooden tags with the inscribed date, *Zhizhi sannian* 至治三年 [Third year of Zhizhi], which corresponds to 1323. The trading ship was heavily loaded with various goods encompassing items of ceramic, metal, lacquer, stone, the bulk of copper coins, red sandalwood, herbs and spices.

¹⁹⁷ The Sinan wreck was first discovered in 1975 by a local fisherman. It was thoroughly investigated and excavated by the Cultural Properties Administration of Korea 문화공보부 (the present-day Cultural Heritage Administration 문화재청) from 1976 to 1984. The excavation report, entitled *Sinan haejeo yumul* (신안해저유물 新安海底遺物), was published in four volumes from 1981 to 1988. Munhwa gongbobu Munhwajae gwalliguk 文化公報部 文化財管理局, *Sinan haejeo yumul* 新安海底遺物 [Artefacts from the Sinan coast] (Seoul: Donghwa Publishing Co., vol. 1, 1981; vol. 2, 1984; vol. 3, 1985; vol. 4, 1988). On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Sinan discovery in 2006, a revised edition of *Sinan haejeo yumul* was published in three volumes. Munhwa jaechong Gungnip haeyang yumul jeonsigwan 문화재청 국립해양유물전시관, *Sinanseon* 신안선 [The Sinan wreck] 3 vols. (Mokpo: Gungnip haeyang yumul jeonsigwan, 2006).

Yuan dynasty, when China was part of the vast Mongol empire.¹⁹⁸ Among these finds, more than 12,000 pieces were celadons from the Longquan kilns. All of these artefacts were brought to the surface and sent to the National Museum of Korea.¹⁹⁹



Map 3 Sinan wreck location and medieval maritime trade routes in the East Asia Sea.

The group of four Longquan celadon figures may be among the most important yet understudied ceramic items found on the Sinan wreck. Since the first discovery of these figures in the late 1970s and early 1980s, they have featured in various exhibitions and publications as ‘masterpieces’ from this

¹⁹⁸ Chinese ceramics salvaged from this shipwreck include major types of Yuan ceramics: Longquan ware, Jingdezhen ware, Jun-type ware, Jian ware, Jizhou ware, Cizhou ware, Ganzhou ware, Zhangzhou ware and Shiwan ware.

¹⁹⁹ Additionally, over 1,700 pieces of Longquan ware that were illegally removed from the wreck site have later been confiscated by the Korean authorities. Consequently, the museum now has the world’s largest collection of Longquan celadons.

shipwreck for their sculptural quality; yet, they have been only vaguely described as ‘figures in human form’. Too little effort has been made to understand the individual objects and their iconography as well as their function or purpose. Found on the shipwreck in an export context, these small ceramic religious figures, presumably intended for domestic worship, raise further questions as to their meaning and use beyond China: Why and how did they appear on the Sinan ship? Since they are found in a dated context, it is surprising that they have been largely ignored in scholarship. Despite their small number, they are significant for the study of Longquan ceramic sculpture. It is impossible to assess Longquan religious sculpture production without considering these objects. This section begins with extended descriptions of the four Sinan figures, and then turns to a discussion of why they were found there. This is the first attempt ever to study the Sinan figures in greater depth.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ As part of the current research, my paper confined to a discussion of the four Longquan figures was presented at the Zhejiang Provincial Museum International Symposium, Hangzhou, December 18-19, 2012: “Longquan Figures from the Sinan Wreck: Their Iconography, Function and Meaning,” in *Haishang sichou zhi lu: Zhongguo gudai ciqi shuchu ji wenhua yingxiang guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji*, 海上絲綢之路：中國古代瓷器輸出及文化影響國際學術研討會論文集 [Proceedings of the international symposium on the maritime silk road: on the export of ancient Chinese porcelains and their cultural influence], ed. Shen Qionghua 沈琼華 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin meishu chubanshe, 2013), 105-19.

Figure of Guanyin of the South Sea

The first figure represents a Buddhist deity and is the best-known example of Longquan sculpture recovered from the Sinan wreck [Fig. 3.10].²⁰¹ The figure is



Fig. 3.10 Guanyin. Yuan dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 23.7 cm. National Museum of Korea (Sindo 172).

damaged, but it has been viewed as a notable example of Yuan celadon sculpture and has been mentioned in several publications since its recovery.²⁰² The deity is seated on a rocky throne, with the right arm resting on the raised right knee and

²⁰¹ The reason may be that the present figure was the first and only Longquan sculpture illustrated in the catalogue published to accompany the special exhibition which featured a selection of the artefacts found in the wreck held at the National Museum of Korea in 1977. See Gungnip jungang bangmulgwan 國立中央博物館, *Sinan haejeo munmul: Sinan haejeo munhwa teukbyeoljeon dorok* 新安海底文物: 新安海底文化財特別展圖錄 [Special exhibition of cultural relics found off the Sinan coast] (Seoul: Samhwa chulpansa, 1977), pl. 143. Hence, many scholars have consistently misconceived the figure as the single example of celadon sculpture found in the Sinan cargo. The figure was looted before the official excavation was conducted at the wreck site in 1976, but was later seized by Korean authorities.

²⁰² Susanne G. Valenstein, "Some Chinese Celadons Reclaimed from the Sea," *Oriental Art* 25, no. 1 (1979): 100; Carla M. Zainie, "Sinan Shipwreck and Early Muromachi Art Collections," *Oriental Art* 25, no. 1 (1979): 108; Harrison-Hall, "Representational Longquan Wares," 31.

the left hand extended forward and down on the knee of the left pendent leg. The figure is dressed in flowing garments, adorned with a network of beaded chains across the lower portion of the robe. A long, thin shawl is draped over the shoulders, and a beaded necklace with jewels and a pendant decorates the chest of the figure. The hair is arranged in bejewelled braids from which tendrils of hair escape at the shoulders. The sculpture is covered with a greyish-green glaze, and the base is hollow. Although the figure's right hand and the headdress are missing, in this position the deity is reminiscent of the bodhisattva Guanyin on Mount Potalaka, who is usually seated at royal ease atop rockery [Fig. 1.36]. The rocky throne of the figure resembles the *qingbai* porcelain Guanyin sculpture (also apparently sitting in a royal ease pose) unearthed from the tomb of Shi Shengzu in Quzhou, dated to 1274, and discussed in Chapter Two [Fig. 2.20]. This suggests that the Sinan figure of Guanyin might have been produced earlier than the date of the shipwreck (circa 1323), as early as in the late thirteenth century.

Many comparable celadon examples to the current figure have survived from the Yuan period, including a figure in the Longquan Celadon Museum collection [Fig. 3.11]. An almost identical figure can be found in the Wuyi County Museum in the Zhejiang province [Fig. 3.12]. They are the specimens closest to the Sinan Guanyin, stylistically and iconographically.²⁰³ In both sculptures, Guanyin is seated on a rock throne with one pendent leg and the other leg drawn

²⁰³ Another similar figure of Guanyin is in the collection of Mr & Mrs Earl Lu. Published in Southeast Asian Ceramic Society and National Museum of Singapore ed., *Chinese Celadons and Other Related Wares in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Arts Orientalis, 1979), pl. 164. In addition, Bonhams San Francisco recently sold a Longquan figure of Guanyin in a similar style (*Fine Asian Works of Art*, 20 December 2011, lot 8226). The Hangzhou Museum also has a comparable example. In this sculpture, the bodhisattva sits in a variant form of royal ease posture. This piece is apparently unpublished but it is on permanent display at the museum.

up, bent at the knee. The bodhisattva wears a mantle across the shoulders as well as a long, thin, trailing scarf. Their chests and robes in both figures are adorned with a network of beaded chains, more elaborate than those of the Sinan Guanyin. The most visible difference between these figures and the Sinan figure is that the faces, hands and feet of the former are unglazed, whereas the latter is entirely covered in celadon glaze.



Fig. 3.11 (left) Guanyin. Yuan dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 28.8 cm. Longquan Celadon Museum.

Fig. 3.12 (right) Guanyin. Yuan dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 28.2 cm. Wuyi County Museum.

By comparing the Sinan figure with the two Guanyin figures in the museum collections discussed above, it is possible to identify what the missing parts of the former figure are supposed to be and to reconstruct the physical integrity of the piece, thereby suggesting the identity of the figure. The headdress on these figures bears an image of Buddha Amitabha, which suggests that the Sinan example might have also carried a small Amitabha image on his crown,

which is often the single iconographic clue that identifies Avalokiteshvara. The broken celadon figure now measures 23.7 cm in height. Accounting for the missing part of the head, the sculpture may have been similar in size to the other examples — that is, around 28 cm in height — when it was complete.

The two comparable Longquan sculptures further indicate that there could have been a white parrot 鸚鵡, an emblem of filial piety, on the right side of Guanyin, and a water bottle on the left side, both distinctive attributes of this bodhisattva.²⁰⁴ In addition, to the lower left of Guanyin there may have been a depiction of Sudhana or Shancai tongzi 善財童子 as a small child kneeling on a lotus flower and attending to the bodhisattva. Sudhana is one of the acolytes of Avalokiteshvara who is mentioned in the *Gandavyuha*, in the last chapter of the Flower Garland Sutra (Avatamsaka Sutra).²⁰⁵ Both Sudhana and a white parrot are characteristic attributes of a new iconography known as Guanyin of the South Sea (Nanhai Guanyin 南海觀音) — one of the indigenous Chinese forms of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara that appeared in the Song dynasty.

²⁰⁴ The scriptural basis of the white parrot comes from the Shorter Pure Land Sutra (Sukhavativyuha Sutra). However, a more convincing source for the parrot derives from popular literature, such as the Precious Scroll of the Parrot (*Yingge baojuan* 鸚鵡寶撰), which tells the story of a parrot who becomes a disciple of Avalokiteshvara. During the Tang dynasty a little parrot ventures out to search for its mother's favorite food upon which it is captured by hunters. When it manages to escape it finds out that its mother has already died. The parrot grieves for its mother and provides her with a proper funeral. It then sets out to become a disciple of Avalokiteshvara and becomes a symbol of filial piety. In popular iconography, the parrot is coloured white and usually seen hovering to the right of Avalokiteshvara with either a pearl or a prayer bead clasped in its beak. For discussions of this legend, see Yü, *Kuan-Yin*, 443-47; Wilt Idema, "The Filial Parrot in Qing Dynasty Dress: A Short Discussion of the *Yingge baojuan* [Precious Scroll of the Parrot]," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 30 (2002): 77-96.

²⁰⁵ The text describes the pilgrimage of a boy called Sudhana, who visits and consults 54 spiritual masters in his quest for enlightenment. Sitting on a diamond boulder in a clearing surrounded by willow trees and bamboo, Avalokiteshvara, the 28th of these teachers, is found residing in the Pure Land, known as Potalaka, and preaches the Dharma to Sudhana. The pilgrimage of Sudhana was a popular subject in Buddhist iconography, as the story became very popular in China during the Song dynasty; see Jan Fontein, *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana: A Study of Gandavyuha Illustrations in China, Japan and Java* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), 23-77.

The legend of Guanyin of the South Sea is anchored in Mount Putuo (Putuoshan 普陀山) in Zhejiang. Although Potalaka, cited in the sutras as the dwelling place of the bodhisattva Guanyin, was believed to have been situated somewhere in the Indian ocean, after the twelfth century, this paradise came to be envisioned as Mount Putuo, an island off the coast of Zhejiang province. Once Mount Putuo had become established as the Chinese Potalaka, from the twelfth century onward, Guanyin began to be accompanied first by the young pilgrim, Sudhana or Shancai, and later by both the boy and Nagakanya, known as Longnü 龍女 in Chinese, the Dragon Princess.²⁰⁶ The male and female attendants and a white parrot became the three typical acolytes of Guanyin of the South Sea. This new iconography clearly evolved from the traditional Potalaka Guanyin, but contains additional characteristics — the two attendants and a bird, which are identified exclusively with Mount Putuo.

The earliest known images of Guanyin of the South Sea are probably rock carvings in the Dazu Grottoes 大足石窟 in Chongqing 重慶, Sichuan. There are three dated groups of the Guanyin triad from the Southern Song period: no. 6 at Shimenshan 石門山, dated 1141; no. 8 at Beida 北大, dated 1148; and no. 136 at

²⁰⁶ The Flower Garland Sutra provides the canonical source for Sudhana, as discussed above, but Nagakanya or Longnü does not appear to have a direct connection with Avalokiteshvara in Buddhist scriptures. However, she may be traced to the esoteric texts and the Lotus Sutra. According to esoteric sources, Longnü, the daughter of the Dragon King, offered a precious jewel to Guanyin as a token of gratitude for the bodhisattva having visited the Dragon King's palace in order to reveal the *dharani*. Chün-fang Yü has suggested the depiction of a pair of male and female attendants with Guanyin may have been influenced by the Daoist trinity of the Jade Emperor flanked by Golden Body or Jintong 金童 and Jade Girl or Yunü 玉女, a popular Daoist iconography since the Tang dynasty. Yü, *Kuan-yin*, 440.

Beishan 北山, dated 1141-46.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, there is at least one published example of a small-scale bronze from the Song, possibly dating to the thirteenth century, in the Nitta Group collection in Japan [Fig. 3.13]. In this guise, Guanyin



Fig. 3.13 Guanyin with attendants. Song dynasty. Gilt bronze. Height 19.3 cm. Nitta Group Collection.

is seated on a rocky throne in a leisurely position. Shancai and Longnü stand to either side of the bodhisattva. However, the white parrot and the water bottle are not included in this work. Interestingly, while numerous small Song and Yuan bronzes depicting Guanyin on Mount Potalaka survive today, such as the Guanyin sculpture in the British Museum mentioned in Chapter One [Fig. 1.42], very few extant pieces of the South-Sea Guanyin are made of metal.²⁰⁸ This is perhaps

²⁰⁷ Liu Changjiu 劉長久 et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu* 大足石刻研究 [The Dazu rock carvings] (Chengdu: Sichuansheng shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 1985), 395, 435 and 544. Images of these sculptures are not reproduced in this or other books consulted and I have not been able to see them.

²⁰⁸ Some Ming dynasty examples are known, see, Guoli gugong bowuyuan 國立故宮博物院 ed., *Jintong fo zaoxiang tezhan tulu* 金銅佛造像特展圖錄 [The crucible of compassion and wisdom: special exhibition catalog of the Buddhist bronzes from the Nitta Group Collection at the National Palace Museum] (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1987), pl. 110. Also see Shoudu bowuguan 首都博物館 ed., *Fojiao cibe nüshen*, pl. 8.

because monks and members of the elite, who would mostly commission bronze icons for their devotional practice, might have opted for traditional or orthodox images of the bodhisattva that were being enshrined and worshiped in Buddhist institutions.

Scholars such as Chün-fang Yü opined that the iconography of the South-Sea Guanyin only achieved nationwide prominence by the late Ming although it first appeared in the twelfth century.²⁰⁹ As discussed above, there is scant visual evidence of the triad of Guanyin and her two attendants prior to the late Ming (e.g. paintings and sculpted images in bronze, wood and stone), and in most cases iconographic elements are somewhat incomplete and missing, as seen in the Nitta bronze Guanyin. However, it is significant that small ceramic icons of the South-Sea Guanyin are abundant before the late Ming, a fact which challenges this



Fig. 3.14 Guanyin. Yuan dynasty. *Qingbai* ware. Height 19.4 cm. Excavated at Chiping, Shandong province. Chiping Cultural Relics Management Office.

²⁰⁹ Yü, “Female Images of Kuan-yin in Post-T’ang China,” 65.

theory. They were made in the kilns at Jingdezhen and to a greater degree at Longquan as early as the Yuan [Fig. 3.14].²¹⁰ In fact, Guanyin of the South Sea was arguably the most popular image to emerge in Longquan. Ceramic sculptures representing this particular manifestation of Guanyin began to be produced there in large numbers and in various shapes and sizes from the Yuan dynasty.

This iconography most likely resulted from the establishment of Putuo Island as one of the most sacred sites of the Guanyin cult [Figs 3.15 and 3.16]. As

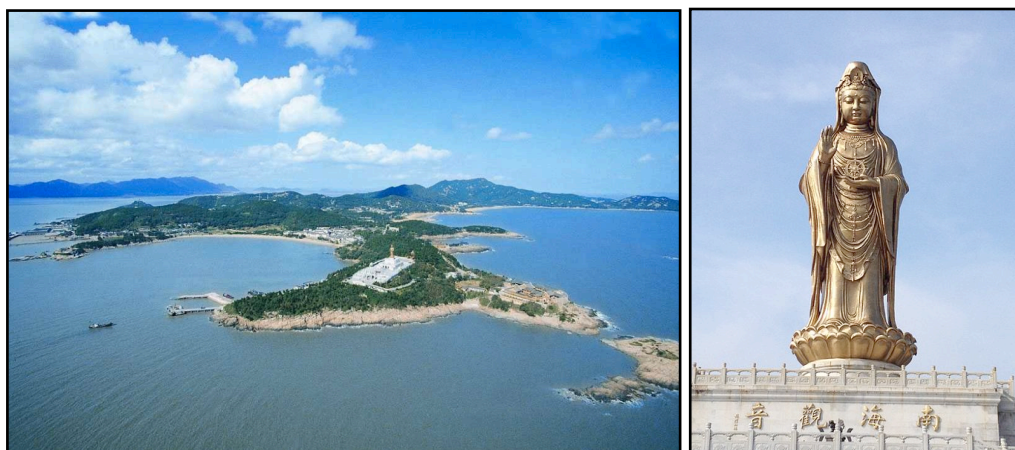


Fig. 3.15 (left) View of Putuo Island.

Fig. 3.16 (right) Statue of the South-Sea Guanyin in Putuo Island. 20th century. Metal. Height 33 m.

discussed earlier, the Upper Tianzhu Monastery in Hangzhou, which became connected with the legend of the White-Robed Guanyin, was the main pilgrimage centre for Guanyin worship during the Southern Song. Putuo eventually overtook it and succeeded in becoming the local, national and international Guanyin cultic and pilgrimage centre in the subsequent Yuan and Ming dynasties. The prevalence of Guanyin images in Longquan — and Guanyin of the South Sea in particular —

²¹⁰ For another *qingbai* porcelain figure of Guanyin of the South Sea from the Yuan period, see Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong, *Jingdezhen Wares: the Yuan Evolution* (Hong Kong: Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong, 1984), 93, fig. 26. The Sinan wreck also yielded two similar *qingbai* figures (Sinan 15500 and Sindo 1772).

was probably a response to popular perceptions of this deity concentrated in the Zhejiang region.

The Sinan figure is one of many Longquan examples of the South-Sea Guanyin, the form of Avalokiteshvara associated with Mount Putuo, and significantly, the sculpture represents the earliest phases of this iconography, prior to its codification as a female form with three companions by the Ming. It has been suggested that the feminisation of the South-Sea Guanyin began when Putuo was identified as the home of Princess Miaoshan 妙善, a feminine form of Guanyin whose legend is anchored in Xiangshan 香山 in Henan. Guanyin of the South Sea began to be perceived as completely feminine and depicted as a feminine deity after Xiangshan became identified with Putuo.²¹¹ The current figure depicts the bodhisattva as androgynous or masculine, accompanied only by the male attendant Shancai and a white parrot. Later Guanyin figures from Longquan portray the bodhisattva in a more feminine and complete form with the inclusion of the female attendant Longnü. Indeed, this particular image of the South-Sea Guanyin became especially prevalent in Longquan. Since examples are neither dated nor found in datable contexts, it is challenging to date individual sculptural works representing the new manifestation of Guanyin. However, extant examples of this type suggest that Longquan began to create figures of this iconography of the South-Sea Guanyin from the fourteenth century onward.

²¹¹ Interestingly, there is no visual representation of Miaoshan Guanyin. She appears to have become merged with other feminine forms of Guanyin. Yü, "Feminine Images of Kuan-yin in Post T'ang China," 62-6. For more on the story of Miaoshan Guanyin and its relationship with the pilgrimage centre Xiangshan, see Glen Dudbridge, *The Legend of Miaoshan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

A multitude of models of Guanyin with this iconography from Longquan survive and may be subdivided into two broad types: those that have no ornate setting and those that are positioned in a niche surrounded by a rocky grotto. It is noteworthy that, no matter what type it is, the bodhisattva is seated in meditation and has a feminine-looking face. A Guanyin figure in the collection of Mr K. T. Goh is a prime example of the former type [Fig. 3.17].²¹² The bodhisattva sits on a high-backed rocky throne, her legs folded and her hands on her lap. She is dressed typically, in flowing robes and jewelled pendants. The acolytes, Shancai and Longnü, stand below her on either side, and behind them are a parrot and a vase. Examples of the latter iconographic type are especially numerous and demonstrate the most unique and distinctive sculptural style developed at the Longquan kilns. A small celadon shrine in the Victoria and Albert Museum collection is a typical example [Fig. 3.18]. Several variations with celadon glaze and details left unglazed are known in public and private collections.²¹³ Although varying in size and style, the format of these Longquan shrines is standardised, portraying the bodhisattva seated in a meditative pose on a ledge within a grotto framed by scrolling clouds that issue from the moon above and support a bird to one side and

²¹² A virtually identical figure is in the Collection of Mr and Mrs Chia. Reproduced in South Asian Ceramic Society and National Museum of Singapore ed., *Chinese Celadons and Other Related Wares in Southeast Asia*, pl. 167.

²¹³ A similar shrine is preserved at the Tokyo National Museum. Reproduced in Kubosō kinen bijutsukan 久保惣記念美術館 ed., *Sensei, bansei to Ryūsen-yō no seiji : tokubetsuten* 千声・万声と龍泉窯の青磁：特別展 [Special exhibition: sensei, bansei and celadon of the Longquan kilns] (Izumi: Kubosō kinen bijutsukan, 1996), pl. 166. Another similar piece is held in the Shanghai Museum. Published in Wang Qingzheng 汪慶正 ed., *Zhongguo taoci quanji: Yuan I* 中國陶瓷全集：元（上）[The complete works of Chinese ceramics 10: Yuan dynasty part I] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 2000), pl. 94.

a vase to the other above two acolytes standing on rocky outcrops amidst waves.

There are usually two circular apertures on the reverse.



Fig. 3.17 (left) Guanyin. Yuan to Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 22 cm. Private Collection.

Fig. 3.18 (right) Guanyin shrine. Yuan-Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 24.1 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum (C.1158-1917).

Furthermore, in some of the Longquan Guanyin shrines, the bodhisattva is shown as the White-Robed Guanyin, commonly identified by her long, flowing, hooded white cape. The small celadon shrine in the Jilin Provincial Museum is representative of this image of Guanyin [Fig. 3.19].²¹⁴ The White-Robed Guanyin is accompanied by the two attendants and a white parrot, the three companions of Guanyin of the South Sea. A very similar image can also be found in a hanging scroll by Zhao Yi 趙奕 (act. mid-fourteenth century) [Fig. 3.20]. The painting represents Guanyin as a lady wearing a white flowing robe seated on a cliff in

²¹⁴ Numerous examples of this type of Guanyin grotto shrine of varying styles dating to the Yuan and Ming dynasties are found in museums and private collections. For an example in the collection of the Chuzhou Celadon Museum, see Ye ed., *Meizi chuqing*, pl. 177. Beijing Art Museum also has a shrine of this type, see Zhongguo gutaoci xuehui ed., *Longquanyao yanjiu*, 275, fig. 20. For a piece in the Guangdong Provincial Museum, see *ibid.*, 385, fig. 20.

front of a bamboo grove holding a vase in her hand. Longnü stands behind her, and Shancai bends forward in respect toward the bodhisattva. A white parrot hovers at her upper right side. Both pieces represent the South-Sea Guanyin nearly indistinguishably from the White-Robed Guanyin icon and clearly demonstrate that images of the two different manifestations of Guanyin became intermingled and superimposed. According to Chün-fang Yü, the changing iconography of Guanyin was closely influenced by how pilgrims saw the deity. The growing popularity of this hybrid image of the South-Sea Guanyin wearing a white robe during and following the Yuan may be because Guanyin began to appear to pilgrims as a vision and other visitors on Putuo increasingly as the White-Robed Guanyin, just as she did at Upper Tianzhu in Hangzhou.²¹⁵



Fig. 3.19 (left) Guanyin shrine. Yuan to Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 24.2 cm. Jilin Provincial Museum.

Fig. 3.20 (right) Zhao Yi (attr.). *Guanyin*. Yuan dynasty, dated 1313. Hanging scroll; ink and colour on silk. 108 x 54.8 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

²¹⁵ Yü, *Kuan-yin*, 338-39.

It is unclear what triggered the production of such sculptural forms, which became a specialty of the Longquan potters. The grotto-like setting of the Guanyin shrines is most likely an allusion to Potalaka. Owners of these shrines must have been Guanyin devotees, so they could have had the impression of being present on Mount Putuo, where pilgrims came and prayed for a vision of Guanyin. A wooden shrine dated to the tenth century in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is probably among the earliest sculptural works that represent Guanyin situated in a niche beneath a craggy overhang [Fig. 3.21]. This small portable shrine is modelled with a figure of Guanyin seated on a lotus pedestal, attended by two small human figures that appear to be devout laypeople and may have represented the owners of the shrine. Small-scale shrines devoted to Guanyin were also made of ceramic; the earliest examples are found in Jingdezhen porcelain. A *qingbai*-glazed shrine of Guanyin dated to the early Yuan dynasty was excavated in the



Fig. 3.21 (left) Portable Guanyin shrine. Five Dynasties period. Wood with lacquer and gilding. Height 22.2 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art (42.25.29).
Fig. 3.22 (right) Guanyin shrine. Yuan dynasty. *Qingbai* ware. Excavated at Beijing.

Yuan Dadu residential area at the Houyingfang 后英房 site in Beijing [Fig. 3.22].²¹⁶ The deity, covered with a transparent pale blue glaze, is positioned in a rocky grotto with waves splashing below. Guanyin is seated at royal ease, and in front of the bodhisattva is a small hole that was supposedly destined to hold an incense stick.²¹⁷

Although ceramic Guanyin shrines are most likely to have first appeared in Jingdezhen, surviving examples are scarce. Furthermore, it is interesting that in these *qingbai* shrines, the bodhisattva is merely depicted as the Potalaka Guanyin, who is present solely in the deity's paradisiacal realm. By contrast, numerous Guanyin shrines from Longquan survive, and their main image is Guanyin of the South Sea flanked by her three acolytes. Longquan was probably the first to create this iconography of Guanyin in the ceramic sculptures as grotto shrines. The reason for this may be that, by the time of the Yuan, Putuo in Zhejiang had become the new major pilgrimage centre of Guanyin worship, succeeding Upper Tianzhu in Hangzhou, and in turn, Guanyin of the South Sea, identified exclusively with Putuo, rose to pre-eminence. It is therefore no wonder that the iconography of the South-Sea Guanyin triumphed over other forms of Guanyin at the Longquan kilns. The large number of extant celadon sculptures of the South-Sea Guanyin, with multiple forms and iconographies, suggests that this particular Guanyin image enjoyed unprecedented popularity and success in the Zhejiang

²¹⁶ Yuan Dadu kaogudui 元大都考古隊, "Beijing Houyingfang Yuandai juzhu yizhi," 北京后英房元代居住遺址 [Houyingfang residential site, Beijing], *KG* 6 (1972): 2-16.

²¹⁷ A comparable *qingbai* shrine was sold by Roger Keverne Ltd in London. Roger Keverne, *Fine and Rare Chinese Works of Art and Ceramics Summer Exhibition, 2008* (London: Roger Keverne Ltd, 2008), cat. no. 24.

region from the Yuan period onward with the growing cult of the South-Sea Guanyin. Furthermore, it can be assumed that, to a certain extent, these Longquan ceramic sculptures played a formative role in popularising and spreading the cult and iconography of the South-Sea Guanyin across the country during the Yuan and Ming periods and even beyond, as evidenced by the Sinan Guanyin figure.

Figure of the Wife of Mr Ma

This small female figure is one of the two Buddhist icons found on the Sinan wreck [Fig. 3.23], together with the figure of the South-Sea Guanyin, discussed above. The figure is perhaps the least known Longquan figure from this shipwreck. It has long been kept in storage at the National Museum of Korea and



Fig. 3.23 Guanyin as Mr Ma's Wife. Yuan dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 17.9 cm. National Museum of Korea (Sindo 1811).

has not been on public view until recently.²¹⁸ The figure represents a seated young woman holding a large, tied bundle consisting of four scrolls. She is dressed in a tight-fitting, long-sleeved inner robe that hangs so low as to reveal only the tips of her toes and a short-sleeved outer robe that covers the shoulders, fastened at the waist by a cord and falling in ripples at each side. Her knees are parted, but her feet, flat on the ground, touch gently. The bottom of the bundle of scrolls is propped against her left hand, and she is gently holding the upper part of it with her right hand. Her hair is elegantly piled and tied in a knot on top of her head and is arranged in beaded braids from which tendrils of hair escape at the shoulders. She is seated on a barrel-shaped stool, known as a *zuodun* 坐敦, decorated in three registers with a carved cash-diaper pattern under celadon glaze marked with iron-rich brown spots. The base of the sculpture is also fully covered with a celadon glaze and spots of iron pigment.

Her appearance as a beautiful young woman holding scrolls may identify the figure as Mr Ma's wife or Malangfu 馬郎婦, who is often known as Guanyin with a Fish Basket or Yulan Guanyin 魚籃觀音, a feminine form of Guanyin. The mythology of her character is as follows: During the Tang dynasty, in 809 (or 817), a devout Buddhist woman of great beauty came to a village in Shaanxi. Many young men in the village, attracted to her beauty, proposed marriage. She

²¹⁸ The figure was illegally excavated from the wreck and later returned to the National Museum of Korea. Most recently, this sculpture has been included in two special exhibitions held in Korea and China. Busan bangmulgwan 부산박물관 ed., *Heugeul bijeo ogeul mandeulda: Yongcheon cheongja* 흙으로 빚어 옥을 만들다: 용천청자 [Making jade out of clay: Longquan celadon] (Busan: Busan bangmulgwan, 2011), no.10; Shen Qionghua 沈琼華 ed., *Da Yuan fanying: Hanguo Xin'an chenchuan chushui wenwu jinghua* 大元颶影: 韓國新安沈船出水文物精華 [Sailing from the Great Yuan: artefacts excavated from the Sinan Shipwreck] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2012), 160-61.

said that she would marry the man who could memorise the “Universal Gateway” Chapter (*Pumen pin* 普門品) of the Lotus Sutra (*Fahua jing* 法華經) in one night.²¹⁹ On the following day, twenty men recited the scripture for her. Since she could not marry all of them, she asked them to memorise the Diamond Sutra (*Jingang jing* 金剛經). The next day, half of the men successfully completed the task, and she thereupon announced that she would marry the one who could memorise the entire Lotus Sutra in three days. Only the young man with the surname Ma 馬 was able to accomplish the task. However, on their wedding day, the young woman became ill and died suddenly. Her body quickly began to decompose, and she was buried in a hurry. A few days later, an old monk made a visit to Ma’s house and asked Ma to show him the tomb. When the monk opened the coffin, they discovered that the bones of her skeleton were linked together by a gold chain. Since the linkage of bones by a golden chain was considered a sign of a holy person, the monk declared that the young woman was a manifestation of a great sage who had come in order to save the people in this region from their bad *karma*. After washing the bones, the monk carried them on his staff and ascended to heaven. Subsequently, many people living in the Shaanxi region converted to Buddhism.²²⁰

This story was originally worshiped in Shaanxi because the Wife of Mr Ma lived in a village in the region. However, the place where she appeared was eventually changed from Shaanxi to Jiangsu (east of present-day Nantong 南通).

²¹⁹ The “Universal Gateway” Chapter is the story of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara that is told in chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra.

²²⁰ This story was paraphrased from Yü, *Kuan-yin*, 419-20.

Chün-fang Yü has pointed out that the change of place is meaningful because it denotes that the cult eventually took root in present-day Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces.²²¹ The Sinan figure thus shows that, although the legend of Mr Ma's Wife was rooted in Shaanxi, her cult became especially popular in the southeast coastal region after the Song dynasty.

Her story, with minor variations, is found in numerous Buddhist chronicles compiled since the Song dynasty.²²² The story has evolved over the centuries as details have gradually been added. The early version of this legend mentioned neither the fish basket nor the name of the region. It was only in later versions of the tale that the woman came to be identified as a manifestation of Avalokiteshvara and became conflated with Guanyin with a Fish Basket, who assumed the form of a beautiful female fishmonger and appeared in Golden Sand Beach (Jinshatan 金沙灘) in Shaanxi holding a basket of fish with one arm. It was by the late fourteenth century that the Wife of Mr Ma became firmly interwoven with the Fish-Basket Guanyin.²²³

Many paintings from the Song and Yuan dynasties depicting Guanyin with a Fish Basket have survived through the centuries. The fish basket is the single most crucial indicator for the identification of this manifestation of Guanyin. One of the best-known examples is a painting dated to 1318 by inscription at the

²²¹ Ibid., 427.

²²² Ibid., 547-48, note 6.

²²³ Li Yumin 李玉珉 ed., *Guanyin tezhan* 觀音特展 [Vision of compassion: images of Guanyin in Chinese art] (Taipei: Guoli gogung bowuyuan, 2000), 201-02. The 'Universal Gateway' Chapter of the Lotus Sutra lists 33 forms in which Guanyin appears. Although both manifestations share the same story of origin, the two women appear as separate divinities within the 33 forms of Guanyin in the Lotus Sutra. Fish-Basket Guanyin appears as no. 10 and Mr Ma's Wife as no. 28.

Museum of Fine Arts in Boston [Fig. 3.24].²²⁴ In this painting, Guanyin is shown wearing a secular garment and carrying a fish basket in her right hand, while the left hand is gently holding the lower part of her outer skirt to reveal the decorative chains worn by Buddhist deities. Her hair is tied up in a knot on her head. There also exists a small Jingdezhen porcelain figure of the Fish-Basket Guanyin from the Yuan period whose iconography is almost identical to the Boston Guanyin [Fig. 3.25].



Fig. 3.24 (left) *Guanyin with a Fish Basket*. Yuan dynasty. Hanging scroll mounted as a panel; ink and colour on silk. 84.5 x 36.4 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (05.199).

Fig. 3.25 (right) *Fish-Basket Guanyin*. Yuan dynasty. *Qingbai* ware. Height 14.9 cm. The Roberto T. Villanueva Foundation.

For the most part, the manifestation of Guanyin as the Wife of Mr Ma is much harder to recognise. However, a Ming-dynasty painting by Wu Bin 吳彬 (circa 1550-circa 1621) gives a hint as to her iconography [Fig. 3.26]. In this

²²⁴ The painting carries an inscription by Mu'an (act. early fourteenth century). For an English translation of the poem, see Sherman E. Lee ed., *Chinese Art under the Mongols: The Yüan Dynasty (1279-1368)* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1968), no. 192.

painting, a lady is depicted holding a *sutra* scroll. She is accompanied by a male attendant, who is standing next to her and carries a fish basket. The fish basket enables us to identify her as Guanyin and her attendant as Shancai. This representation is a prominent example illustrating that, like the fish basket, the *sutra* scroll is related to the Fish-Basket Guanyin, also called Mr Ma's Wife. In



Fig. 3.26 Wu Bin. *Fish-Basket Guanyin*. Ming dynasty. Hanging scroll; ink and colour on silk. 187.8 x 85 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

fact, in many Chan poems, the Wife of Mr Ma is described as a beautiful woman closely associated with sutras. For instance, two works from *Jianghu fengyue ji* 江湖風月集 [Winds and the moon at rivers and lakes], a thirteenth century anthology of Chinese Chan poetry can be translated as follows:²²⁵

Malangfu
 Chanting the Lotus [Sutra], her saliva emits a fragrance;
 How can this sutra compare in profundity to her compassion?

²²⁵ *Jianghu fengyue ji* 江湖風月集 was composed between the end of the Southern Song and the beginning of the Yuan with a postface dated 1288.

Boxing dreams and closing off the sky, as if the heavens had been
wiped clean,
How many people have been snagged on this crescent moon?²²⁶

Malangfu

Charming and modest, she deftly combs her beautiful black hair;
Her heart is like the bitter Golden Thread herb, her mouth like
honeyed sweets.
Unabated for a thousand years, the water at Golden Sand Shoal,
Tinkling like jade pebbles, even now makes the sounds of sutra
chanting.²²⁷

These two poems refer to Mr Ma's Wife as a seductress who attracted a large crowd. However, her beauty was a means for Guanyin to guide people to enlightenment. She encouraged people in Golden Sand Beach to read and memorise sutras to help establish Buddhism in the region. Therefore, the *sutra* scroll is a key component of the iconography of Guanyin as the Wife of Mr Ma.

It seems that during the Song and Yuan periods Mr Ma's Wife was also a popular subject in paintings, which often carry inscriptions by Chan masters. An anonymous hanging scroll dated to the Yuan in the collection of the Maeda Ikutokukai 前田育徳会 may best exemplify this [Fig. 3.27]. The painting is inscribed with verses exalting the Wife of Mr Ma by the Chan monks Yongfu 永福 and Shiyue 世月.²²⁸ Mr Ma's Wife is presented here as a graceful, beautiful woman who looks at the *sutra* she is holding. She wears the attire of an ordinary Chinese woman, with a long skirt and an upper garment. Around her neck hangs a

²²⁶ The poem was composed by Siming Deben 四明德本. Translation by Patricia Fister, "Merōfu Kannon and Her Veneration in Zen and Imperial Circles in Seventeenth-Century Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 34, no. 2 (2007): 421.

²²⁷ The poem was composed by Shugu Fanci 蜀古帆慈. Translation by Fister, *ibid.*, 421.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 422.

Buddhist rosary, and her delicately coiffed hair is piled high upon her head.²²⁹ At the top of the painting, between the two inscriptions, is a small circle containing an image of Avalokiteshvara, indicating that she is a manifestation of Guanyin. On the basis of the paintings and poems discussed above, it is plausible to assume that the appearance of the Sinan figure as a young, beautiful woman with the *sutras* may be a manifestation of Guanyin as the Wife of Mr Ma.



Fig. 3.27 *Malangfu Guanyin*. Yuan dynasty.
Hanging scroll; ink and colour on silk.
111.5 x 50.4 cm. Maeda Collection.

Unlike numerous extant paintings of Guanyin carrying a fish basket, painted images of the bodhisattva manifested as Mr Ma's Wife seem to be rare and limited to the Song and Yuan periods. Furthermore, sculpted images of this Guanyin form appear to be virtually absent, suggesting that the Wife of Mr Ma might not have gained popularity as much as her related form. However, this may

²²⁹ An almost identical painting depicting a Chinese lady holding a rolled-up scroll is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (29.100.443).

be because Mr Ma's Wife had eventually coalesced into Guanyin with a Fish Basket by Ming times, and as a consequence, the iconography of the latter served as the standard image of these two merged identities. The Sinan figure may probably be one of the rare and early examples illustrating the original iconography of Mr Ma's Wife before its adaptation as a beautiful young lady carrying a fish basket as seen in *Five Forms of Guanyin* by Ding Yunpeng 丁雲鵬 (1547-circa 1621) in the collection of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art [Fig 3.28].



Fig. 3.28 Ding Yunpeng. Detail of *Five Forms of Guanyin*. Ming dynasty. Handscroll; ink and colour on paper. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

Figure of a Daoist Immortal, Lan Caihe

While the two Sinan figures represent Buddhist images — each a particular Chinese feminine form of Guanyin — the other two Sinan figures depict Daoist images. This small celadon figure is one of the two Longquan figures from the Sinan wreck officially excavated by Korean archaeologists in 1984 [Fig. 3.29]. It

has therefore appeared in several books and exhibition catalogues and has often been described as a lady although this attribution seems unlikely.²³⁰ The deity is



Fig. 3.29 Daoist immortal, Lan Caihe. Yuan dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 18.6 cm. National Museum of Korea (Sinan 22015).

seated on a rocky pedestal, wearing a long garment with wide sleeves. At the waist is a bow delicately tied and falling gracefully toward his right foot. The legs are boldly opened, and his bare feet are positioned on the ground. In his right hand he holds a small *lingzhi* 靈芝 fungus up to his face, and around his left wrist hangs a bamboo basket. He has a round face with wide, full cheeks and long earlobes, and his hair is tied in a double topknot, which confirms the figure's male identity. The intricately modelled folds of the sleeves and details such as the hair and the basket reflect the work of skilled Longquan potters, as do the finely

²³⁰ Munhwa jaecheong Gungnip haeyang yumul jeonsigwan, *Sinanseon, 2 Chengja, heugyu* 청자, 흑유 [Celadons and black wares], pl. 243; Kim Youngmi, *Sinanseon gwa dojagi gil*, 36; Gungnip jungang bangmulgwan 국립중앙박물관 ed., *Jugguk doja* 중국도자 [Chinese ceramics in the National Museum of Korea] (Seoul: Gungnip jungang bangmulgwan, 2007), pl.120; Busan bangmulgwan ed., *Heugeul bijeo ogeul mandeulda*, pl.11.

carved facial features that radiate calmness. This figure stands out for its high-quality celadon glaze, highlighted by ferruginous brown spots on the rocky base. The hollow interior of the sculpture is also covered with celadon glaze and carefully decorated with iron-brown spots.

From his appearance as an aged man wearing a simple garment, a double topknot and long ears, the figure appears to represent a Daoist immortal. The *lingzhi* fungus and the bamboo basket the figure carries further help identify him as Lan Caihe 藍采和, one of the Eight Immortals of Daoism.²³¹ The *lingzhi* is closely associated with longevity and immortality and was believed to be a key ingredient in elixirs of immortality. Hence, in visual arts, it often appears as an attribute of Daoist saints. Unlike the *lingzhi*, which is a commonly used Daoist symbol, the bamboo basket is more specific. In Daoist iconography, a basket being carried by a youth, an aged man or even a girl often identifies the figure as the Daoist immortal Lan Caihe, who is typically depicted with a bamboo basket held in one hand or carried slung on a hoe over the shoulder.²³² In China, baskets are generally considered auspicious because they can hold many items and therefore represent abundance.²³³ The basket of the immortal Lan Caihe can contain various auspicious objects, such as flowers, fruits and the *lingzhi* fungus

²³¹ Lan Caihe can also be identified with attributes such as castanets and a string of cash.

²³² Lan, his surname, is synonymous with the word for basket. Stephen H. West and Wilt L. Idema ed and trans. *Monks, Bandits, Lovers, and Immortals: Eleven Early Chinese Plays* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2010), 284.

²³³ Patricia Bjaaland Welch, *Chinese Art: A Guide to Motifs and Visual Imagery* (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 2012), 50.

among many others.²³⁴ It would have been helpful to identify what is being carried in the basket, however, in the Sinan figure, the basket is depicted closed.

Lan Caihe's biography is found in a tenth century work of literature, *Xu xianzhuan* 續仙傳 [Sequel to biographies of immortals], compiled by Shen Fen 沈汾.²³⁵ Although this text describes the immortal as a male, his sex is obscure, and in later times, he was occasionally portrayed as a woman. The oldest known visual representation of Lan Caihe can be seen in the Jin tomb ceilings embellished with the theme of the Eight Immortals in Houma, Shanxi, which have already been discussed in Chapter Two. On the carved tile from Tomb 65H4M102, the immortal is shown wearing a belted robe under a leaf-woven apron, carrying a bamboo basket in his left hand while holding a hoe in the right



Fig. 3.30 (left) Ceiling tile from 654M102 showing Lan Caihe. Jin dynasty. 54 x 43 cm.

Fig. 3.31 (right) Lan Caihe from the Chunyang Hall mural at Yonglegong. Yuan dynasty.

²³⁴ W. Perceval Yetts, "The Eight Immortals," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (October 1916): 805-06.

²³⁵ Shen Fen 沈汾, *Xu xianzhuan* 續仙傳 [Sequel to biographies of immortals] *juan* 1, 1a-b, *DZ* 138.

[Fig. 3.30]. His hair is coiled into a double topknot, which is an additional iconographic element identifying Lan Caihe. The immortal also appears in the aforementioned Chunyang Hall mural that depicts the Eight Immortals crossing the sea at Yonglegong [Fig. 3.31]. Here, he holds a flower (seemingly a lotus) in one hand and a bamboo basket full of (lotus) flowers in the other hand. He is shown with bare feet, like the Sinan figure, and two topknots on his head. A later but interesting depiction of Lan Caihe that aids in clarifying the identify of the Sinan figure can be found in a Ming dynasty painting in the collection of the Musée Guimet. This hanging scroll, dated to 1454, portrays a group of Daoist immortals. Among these, some are identifiable because of their distinctive appearance and attributes. Although not represented with topknots, an immortal holding a *lingzhi* fungus in one hand and carrying a bamboo basket full of *lingzhi* may be identified with Lan Caihe [Fig. 3.32].²³⁶



Fig. 3.32 Detail of *Divine Immortals of the Five Paths and Transcendents Who have Obtained the Dao*. Ming dynasty, dated 1454. Hanging scroll; ink, colour and gold on silk. 140.5 x 79 cm. Musée National des Arts Asiatiques Guimet, Paris (EO 693).

²³⁶ Catherine Delacour ed., *La Voie du Tao* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2010), 276.

In the Chuzhou Celadon Museum there is a Longquan figure of a Daoist immortal that the museum identifies as Lan Caihe and dates to the Southern Song or Yuan [Fig. 3.33].²³⁷ The deity is seated on a pedestal, holding a sprig (?) in his right hand and a lidded basket in the left hand. He is shown here with his hair tied in a double knot, wearing the immortal's leaf-woven dress, revealing his bare feet. The face, hands and feet are unglazed, while the rest of the sculpture is covered with a celadon glaze. The iconography of this immortal figure is indeed quite close to the Sinan example. However, its square-shaped base is a type most frequently seen in Ming dynasty celadon sculptures, suggesting a later production date than previously attributed.



Fig. 3.33 Lan Caihe. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware.
Height 27 cm. Chuzhou Celadon Museum, Lishui.

Examples stylistically close to the Sinan figure can be found in Southern Song porcelain models. A *qingbai* figure from the former Falk Collection perhaps

²³⁷ Ye Yingting 葉英挺 ed., *Zhongguo gutaoci: Longquanyao* 中國古陶瓷：龍泉窯 [Ancient ceramics of China: Longquan kilns] (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 2013), pl.167.

represents an immortal [Fig. 3.34].²³⁸ This smiling Daoist deity, dated to the late Southern Song, is seated in a position almost identical to the Sinan figure on a similar rocky pedestal. His legs are opened, and his shoes are exposed. His hand gesture, in particular, is very similar to that of the Sinan figure, although the right and left hand gestures are opposite and he is not holding any attributes.



Fig. 3.34 Daoist Immortal. Southern Song dynasty. *Qingbai* ware. Height 20.3 cm.

Furthermore, the Falk figure wears a typical loose-sleeved simple garment worn by Daoist saints, secured by a sash tied at the waist. Similar facial features can also be seen on the figure, such as the round face, the large ears and the hair in a double topknot. Moreover, a comparison of the Sinan figure with the two aforementioned porcelain Daoist figures that were unearthed from the tombs dated 1268 reveals some similarities, such as the physical appearance, the seated pose and the right hand holding an attribute [Figs 2.16 and 2.17]. This would suggest

²³⁸ This piece was sold by Christie's New York (*The Falk Collection I Important Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, 20 September 2001, lot 106).

that the current Longquan figure of Lan Caihe under discussion can possibly be dated to as early as the late thirteenth century.

It appears that the production of such Daoist subject figures continued well into the Yuan dynasty at the Longquan kilns. There are a few existing examples datable to this period. A celadon figure, excavated in Hangzhou and now in the Zhejiang Provincial Museum, probably represents a Daoist immortal or a priest [Fig. 3.35].²³⁹ He sits on a rocky pedestal wearing a belted robe and a full-head-sized cap that falls to the shoulder and is holding a fan — traditionally used by Daoist sages and saints — with both hands. He is shown with a serene and smiling expression. Areas of exposed flesh, such as his face and chest, are fired in biscuit. The remainder is glazed with a crackled celadon glaze.



Fig. 3.35 Daoist immortal or priest. Yuan dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 26.5 cm. Excavated at Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. Zhejiang Provincial Museum.

²³⁹ Monique Crick et al, *Céladon: Grès des Musées de la Province du Zhejiang, Chine* (Paris: Association Paris-Musées, 2005), 200. The Zhejiang Provincial Museum identifies the figure as a Daoist priest (Daoshi 道士), however, his identity is uncertain.

Another Daoist figure from the same collection, also unearthed in Hangzhou, sits in a relaxed pose on a rocky throne, his right leg crossing over his left [Fig. 3.36].²⁴⁰ He is dressed in long, flowing robes that lie open at the chest.



Fig. 3.36 Daoist immortal. Yuan dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 31.6 cm. Excavated at Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. Zhejiang Provincial Museum.

His hair is swept up to the top of his head and is covered by a typical Daoist *ruyi* crown. He has protruding eyes, a broad nose, and slightly parted lips, revealing the teeth; the ears have characteristically long lobes. His right hand holds a fan, and his left hand, which rests on his knee, faces upward. It is possible that the left hand may have originally held a Daoist symbol attribute such as a *lingzhi* or a peach, as this would have been expected for such a figure. To his right side is a crane, a symbol of longevity. A thick celadon glaze covers the robes and cap of the figure, while other areas are left unglazed. Similarly to the previous Longquan

²⁴⁰ The figure was excavated in Wensan Road 温三路, Hangzhou. Personal communication with Cai Naiwu 蔡乃武, curator at the Zhejiang Provincial Museum, 19 December 2012.

figure, it is unclear which deity he is. Although a fan and a crane are important Daoist symbols, they do not help to identify the figure. However, it seems likely that the figure represents a Daoist immortal rather than a priest because of the crane, a frequent companion of immortals.²⁴¹

The Yuan dynasty was a crucial period in the history of religious Daoism. Before the Mongol conquest, the Southern Song regime controlled only the southern part of China, opposite the Jin dynasty, which had been established by the Jurchens in north China. As a result, China was divided in two halves, a northern and a southern one, and Daoist sects were likewise split. Unlike the Quanzhen tradition that prevailed in the north, in south China, Sanshan Fulu 三山符籙 or the Talismans and Registers of the Three Mountains, that is to say, the three Daoist sects — Tianshi 天師 at Mount Longhu 龍虎山 in Jiangxi, Shangqing 上清 at Mount Mao 茅山 in Jiangsu, and Lingbao 靈寶 at Mount Gezao 閣皂山 in Jiangxi — were among the most prominent during the Southern Song. Eventually, Tianshi prevailed over Shangqing and Lingbao when the Southern Song emperor Lizong 理宗 (r. 1224-64) granted the thirty-fifth Celestial Master, Zhang Keda 張可大 (1218-63) the privilege of control over all the Sanshan Fulu sects.²⁴² From the thirteenth century onwards, southern Tianshi and northern Quanzhen became the two major traditions of Daoism in China.

During the Yuan dynasty the practices of earlier dynasties continued. In the north, Daoism was dominated by the Quanzhen sect owing to the support of

²⁴¹ The Zhejiang Provincial Museum identifies this figure as a Daoist priest.

²⁴² Lowell Skar, "Ritual Movements, Deity Cults and the Transformation of Daoism in Song and Yuan Times," in *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 424.

the Mongol court. After Khubilai Khan conquered the Southern Song, he acknowledged further Daoist sects in the south. Thereafter, southern Daoism became increasingly important in the Yuan, especially when Khubilai Khan shifted his favour from Quanzhen to Tianshi in the newly-conquered south.²⁴³ Despite expanding southward, Quanzhen was gradually superseded by this sect of southern Daoism, which was renamed Zhengyi 正一, Orthodox Unity, in 1304.²⁴⁴ The Tianshi order enjoyed renewed support from the Yuan emperors, leading to a new period of development for Daoism. In 1276, Khubilai summoned the thirty-sixth Celestial Master, Zhang Zongyan 張宗演 (1244-91) to the capital. When he returned to the south, he left his disciple, Zhang Liusun 張留孫 (1248-1322) behind. Khubilai appointed him as the head of Xuanjiao 玄教 or Mysterious Teaching, which existed only in the Yuan, and all subsequent heads of the Xuanjiao were given authority to control all Daoist affairs in China.²⁴⁵ Daoist priests were believed to possess magical and healing powers and enjoyed a resurgence of political influence under the Mongols.²⁴⁶ The Mongol rulers' patronage of Daoism further strengthened ritual movements and deity cults in Yuan China. The Sinan figure and the two celadon figures found in Hangzhou are

²⁴³ This occurred when the Quanzhen masters lost the debates against the Buddhists at the Mongol courts in Karakorum, Shangdu and Dadu. The last debate was organised in 1281 and was also joined by the southern Celestial Masters. See Shechin Jagchid, "Chinese Buddhism and Taoism during the Mongolian Rule of China," *Journal of the Anglo-Mongolia Society* 6 (1980): 90.

²⁴⁴ Song Lian 宋濂 ed al., *Yuanshi* 元史 [History of the Yuan dynasty] *juan* 202 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 4526-27.

²⁴⁵ Sun K'o-K'uan, "Yü Chi and Southern Taoism during the Yüan Period," in *China under Mongol Rule*, ed. John Langlois (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 212-53.

²⁴⁶ Wu Qianjie 吳全節 (1296-1346), the second patriarch of the Xuanjiao, was perhaps one of the most influential men at court. A number of his portraits of him were painted in the Yuan dynasty. One such example is today in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (46.252). Published in Watt ed., *The World of Khubilai Khan*, fig. 174.

fragmentary but important material evidence for the flourishing of Daoism during the Mongol era.

Figure of a Lady, He Xiangu

The last Longquan figure from the Sinan wreck to be discussed is a small figure of a lady [Fig. 3.37].²⁴⁷ The figure, measuring 19.7 cm in height, is in the form of



Fig. 3.37 He Xiangu. Yuan dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 19.7 cm. National Museum of Korea (Sinan 20420).

a standing woman holding a lotus flower over her shoulder. The lotus leaf that this figure is holding suggests that it may represent He Xiangu, the sole female member of the Eight Daoist Immortals. She wears a long, V-neck dress with tight sleeves, with a small bow tied at the waist. A long, thin scarf is draped over her

²⁴⁷ The figure was published in both the original and revised editions of the wreck's excavation report. Munhwa gongbubu Munhwajae gwalliguk, *Sinan haejeo yumul*, 3, pl. 34 in colour and pl. 183 in black & white; Munhwa jaechong Gungnip haeyang yumul jeonsigwan, *Sinanseon*, 2 *Chengja, heugyu*, pl. 242; Kim, *Sinanseongwa dojagi gil*, 35; Gungnip jungang bangmulgwan, *Jungguk doja*, pl. 121; Busan bangmulgwan, *Heugeul bijeo ogeul mandeulda*, pl. 12.

shoulders and falls straight down on each side of the figure. A knotted, ribbon-like ornament adorns the lower skirt, which falls in graceful folds to the base. The woman holds with both hands a lotus with a perforated cylinder at the top. Her hair is finely combed with incised lines and pinned up with two intricate ornaments hanging down the back of her hair. Furthermore, she is adorned with earrings, and beaded festoons trail over the shoulders. The face, neck and hands of the figure are left unglazed, while the remainder is covered with a clear, transparent celadon glaze.

The image of He Xiangyu, holding a lotus leaf, is not new to Longquan; a Southern Song celadon figure of this immortal was discussed in Chapter Two [Fig. 2.7]. The present figure of He Xiangyu, together with the other immortal figure from the Sinan wreck, Lan Caihe, demonstrates that members of the Eight Immortals group gained further popularity in the south during the Yuan. Longquan kilns first produced these Daoist images as independent icons, however, by Yuan times, they had become a popular decorative motif on several Longquan vessels.²⁴⁸ The Eight Daoist immortals who were recognised and venerated in the Song and Jin dynasties became popularised by the Yuan dynasty. Among the most remarkable types of Longquan vessels are vases decorated with the Eight Daoist Immortals within biscuit-fired panels. He Xiangyu appears on an octagonal vase in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art [Fig. 3.38].²⁴⁹ It is still unclear

²⁴⁸ This theme appears to have been a speciality of the Longquan kilns. According to Elaine C. Buck, the Eight Immortals as a group only appeared on Longquan wares during the Yuan. Buck, “The Eight Immortals on Yuan and Ming Ceramics” Chapter 6.

²⁴⁹ A similar Longquan vase with a depiction of He Xiangyu is in the British Museum (OA 1936.10-12.83).

whether the inclusion of the female immortal in this particular group was a southern trend. Nevertheless, it seems very likely that it was during the Yuan period that the cult of female Daoist divinities rose to prominence in the south and their images began to appear as devotional icons.



Fig. 3.38 Vase with the Eight Immortals. Yuan dynasty, circa 1350. Longquan ware. Height 25.4 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art (1964-58-1).

A Longquan figure of Xiwangmu, the Queen Mother of the West, in the collection of the Shanghai Tianwuguan Art Fund, would support this tendency [Fig. 3.39]. This celadon figure, dated to the Yuan dynasty, is closely related to the Sinan figure in terms of quality and style. The Daoist goddess stands on an oval base with radiating petals. She wears a long, flowing robe with wide sleeves that reaches to the base and reveals only the tips of her shoes, and over her shoulders she has a ‘cloud collar’ flared to a point at the upper arm on each side. Her skirt is adorned with a long, ribbon-like scarf knotted in a bow at the waist and falling in ripples to the base, creating features similar to those of the figure of He Xiangnu.

She holds her hands in front of her, with the right resting on the left.²⁵⁰ Her headdress is very elaborate, with two knobbed and pierced wings centred on a swooping phoenix displaying its wings and tail. The presence of this single phoenix in her headdress, which has been a key iconographic attribute of this Daoist goddess since at least the Yuan dynasty, corroborates the identity of the figure as Xiwangmu.²⁵¹



Fig. 3.39 Xiwangmu. Yuan dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 34.5 cm. Shanghai Tianwuguan Art Fund.

Furthermore, two fourteenth-century porcelain figures of this female deity from Jingdezhen decorated in underglaze iron and unearthed in Hangzhou reveal the popular cult of Daoist goddesses in Zhejiang. One example excavated from a

²⁵⁰ It appears that similar ceramic figures of Xiwangmu were also made in Jingdezhen. The upper half of a fully-glazed female porcelain figure, dating to the Yuan was excavated from the site at Luomaqiao 羅馬橋, Jingdezhen. The figure's hand gestures and the details of the robe are quite similar to the Longquan figure of this female deity and suggest that it may be a representation of Xiwangmu. Published in Fung Ping Shan Museum, *Ceramic Finds from Jingdezhen Kilns (10th-17th Century)* (Hong Kong: Fung Ping Shan Museum, 1992), pl. 118.

²⁵¹ Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 276. This iconography of Xiwangmu is found in the murals of the Shanqing Hall at Yongle gong. Jin ed., *Yongle gong bihua quanji*, pl. 150.

tomb dated to 1336 is currently in the Southern Song Dynasty Guan Kiln Museum, Hangzhou [Fig. 3.40]. Another virtually identical work is in the collection of the Hangzhou Museum.²⁵² In both sculptures, the goddess is enthroned on a base, her hands resting on her lap. She is dressed in flowing white robes decorated with a *lingzhi* motif on the chest and wears her distinctive large headdress.²⁵³ The two acolytes, probably Jintong and Yunü, stand below her on either side, and next to them are two auspicious animals, a crane and a deer.²⁵⁴



Fig. 3.40 Xiwangmu. Yuan dynasty. Porcelain with underglaze iron brown decoration. Height 19 cm. Excavated from a tomb dated to 1336 at Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. Southern Song Dynasty Guan Kiln Museum, Hangzhou.

²⁵² Both figures are on permanent display at the two museums, which identify them as the bodhisattva Guanyin. However, these figures are identified as Xiwangmu by Wang Qingzheng 汪慶正, *Zhongguo taoci quanji 11: Yuan (xia)* 中國陶瓷全集 11: 元 (下) [The complete works of Chinese ceramics 11: Yuan dynasty part II] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 2000), pls 134, 135.

²⁵³ Here, the phoenix is not clearly depicted, but the *lingzhi* motif on her robe reveals that the figure represents a Daoist deity, most likely Xiwangmu and definitely not Guanyin.

²⁵⁴ The presence of these animals which are associated with Daoism further convincingly identifies the figure as Xiwangmu.

Although feminine deities occupy a very specific place in the Daoist world, their images were scarcely recorded prior to the Song dynasty. Xiwangmu is perhaps the most popular and the oldest Daoist goddess whose worship can be traced back to the Han dynasty, as discussed in Chapter One. However, it was not until the Song and Jin dynasties that her images began to (re)appear. Furthermore, a number of new goddesses and female saints emerged during this period. It has been suggested that these ‘new’ feminine Daoist divinities were modelled on the bodhisattva Guanyin and flourished following Guanyin’s initial feminisation from the tenth century onward.²⁵⁵ It appears that female Daoist deities were first prominent in the north, whereas feminine forms of Guanyin were gaining more popularity in the south. Several Cizhou stoneware sculptures of Daoist goddesses have survived from the Jin dynasty, such as the small polychrome figure of the Divine Mother (Shengmu 聖母) in the British Museum [Fig. 3.41].²⁵⁶ The celadon figures of He Xiang and Xiwangmu, together with porcelain counterparts of the latter deity found in Hangzhou, constitute important surviving southern evidence of the early appearance of female Daoist divinities in this medium and further attest to their increasing popularity during the Yuan, particularly in the south.

²⁵⁵ Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008), 177.

²⁵⁶ Numerous similar figures are known. See Shenzhen bowuguan 深圳博物館 ed., *Jingcai: Jin Yuan honglücai ciqi zhong de shenqi yu shixiang*. 精彩：金元紅綠彩瓷器中的神祇與世相 [Spectacular: deities and secular world in overglaze polychrome-decorated ceramics of the Jin and Yuan dynasties] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2009), pls 11, 12 and 13. Shengmu is depicted in these sculptures wearing a single phoenix headdress like Xiwangmu. However, scholars like Guo Xuelei, point out that it is difficult to identify images of Daoist goddesses from the Song and Jin periods because the iconography of each deity has not yet been fully developed. Guo, “Cong honglücai ciqi kan Jindai zongjiao yu shehui shenghuo,” 281.



Fig. 3.41 Daoist goddess (Shengmu). Jin dynasty. Cizhou ware. Height 25 cm. British Museum (1936,1012.87).

Unlike the three previous Longquan figures from the Sinan wreck, the current figure has an unusual feature that deserves discussion, a small hole at the top of the lotus flower that He Xiangtu holds with her two hands on her shoulder. Possibly, the hole was meant to be filled with liquid, which suggests the figure's function as an oil lamp. It is also likely, although less so, that the hole allowed it to be used as a candlestick. The oil may have been poured into the liquid reservoir via the pouring hole. Longquan celadon oil lamps such as this are not uncommon, and many stylistically comparable examples do exist. It appears that oil lamps in human forms were unique to Longquan, as no such types have been found in any other contemporaneous ceramic wares.²⁵⁷ The Sinan figure is among the earliest

²⁵⁷ The occurrence of this particular form in celadon ware seems to be an enduring tradition in the Zhejiang region. Celadon oil lamps or candleholders in the shape of humans or animals were made as early as the fourth century. These are early Yue wares, and numerous examples of this type survive today. For example, an oil lamp in human form and (possibly) a candleholder in the form of a lion are in the collection of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (EA 1956.969 and EA 1956.975, respectively).

examples of this type and almost all of the surviving celadon lamps are dated to the Ming dynasty. Among the most notable examples is a figure in the form of a male attendant in the collection of the Longquan Celadon Museum [Fig. 3.42]. A pair of similar figures was excavated in 1986 in Anqing 安慶, Anhui province, and is currently in the Anqing Museum [Fig. 3.43].²⁵⁸ In addition, the Chuzhou



Fig. 3.42 (left) Oil lamp in the form of an attendant. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 21.7 cm. Longquan Celadon Museum.

Fig. 3.43 (right) Pair of oil lamps in the form of attendants. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 22 cm (left), 24.2 cm (right). Excavated at Anqing, Anhui province. Anqing Museum.

Celadon Museum has a pair of celadon candlesticks in the form of guardians, each holding a vase [Fig. 3.44].

²⁵⁸ Another pair of Longquan oil lamps modelled in the form of male attendants and dated to the late Ming is published in Stephen Little, *The Herzman Collection* (New York: Stanley Herzman, 2000), 29.



Fig. 3.44 Pair of candlesticks in the form of guardians. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 20 cm. Chuzhou Celadon Museum, Lishui.

Stylistically they are very close to the pair of copper candlesticks in human form dating to the seventeenth century that are presently at the Musée Cernuschi in Paris [Fig. 3.45].²⁵⁹ This particular pair is interesting in that it was discovered at a Buddhist temple in Hangzhou, together with a pair of flower vases, also in



Fig. 3.45 Pair of candlesticks in the form of children. Late Ming or early Qing dynasty. Copper. Height 36cm. Musée Cernuschi, Paris (MC 000572 and MC 00574).

²⁵⁹ A number of Ming dynasty bronze candlesticks in human form are known today. See, for example, Robert D. Mowry, *China's Renaissance in Bronze: The Robert H. Clague Collection of Later Chinese Bronzes, 1100-1900* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1993), pl. 54.

human form, and an incense burner.²⁶⁰ They constitute a five-piece altar garniture, known as *wugong* 五供 and typically arranged in a line across the altar with the censer as a centrepiece flanked on either side by candlesticks and with the vases placed at the two ends. The *wugong* seems to have first appeared in the Southern Song period, and their use was likely limited to religious altars at this time.²⁶¹ Nevertheless, such sets became prevalent during the Ming and Qing dynasties and were used in various contexts, religious or ritual and secular.²⁶² Alternatively, a three-piece set (*sangong* 三供) can be comprised of a vase, a censer and a candlestick for the altar, and such sets probably appeared earlier than the *wugong*. Therefore, it is probable that the figure of He Xiangju was originally made as part of a three or five-piece altar set rather than as an individual piece.

Why and How did Longquan Figures Appear on the Sinan Ship?

The development of Longquan religious sculpture production during the Yuan dynasty is significant. A number of important items dating to this period have survived. The three figures unearthed in Beijing and, in particular, the four figures recovered from the Sinan wreck, with their firmly-established date, are the most notable surviving evidence. They demonstrate that, by the time of the Mongol domination in China, the consumers and uses of such devotional celadon objects

²⁶⁰ Michel Maucuer ed., *Bronzes de la Chine Impériale du Xe au XIX Siècle* (Paris: Paris Musées, 2013), pl. 92.

²⁶¹ Mowry, *China's Renaissance in Bronze*, 182.

²⁶² On the *wugong* altar sets and their multiple functions and uses, see Josh Yiu, "The Display of Fragrant Offering: Altar Sets in China" (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 2006).

were not confined to Zhejiang but spread across the country and even beyond China. The Longquan production of this particular form, which probably began in the Southern Song under the influence of Jingdezhen, flourished in the Yuan, when the Longquan kilns arguably became the premier producers of ceramic religious figures to match or perhaps even surpass Jingdezhen in quantity and diversity from the fourteenth century onward.²⁶³

The expanded production of small Longquan religious sculptures was possibly due to the manifestation of private devotion, which became more prevalent after the Song dynasty. Their modest size shows that they could not have been intended for large temple altars. Most of the pieces produced were presumably meant to be used outside religious institutions, although some might have been displayed at the living quarters of monastics. Made from non-precious, easily malleable clay, these ceramic figures could be cheaply obtained, so they would more frequently adorn domestic shrines or household spaces allocated to the personal religious devotions of the laity of humble means who could only afford the cheaper sculptures. At the same time, monks and members of the elite would commission more elaborate examples.

Yuan dynasty Longquan sculptures of religious images were created in the context of religious or popular beliefs that prevailed in China at that time, especially in Zhejiang. The Sinan figures are not exceptions, as discussed above;

²⁶³ The Jingdezhen production of religious sculpture continued well into the Yuan. Notable instances are *qingbai*-glazed large figures of bodhisattvas. The aforementioned figure of Guanyin in the Nelson-Atkin Museum of Art, dated 1298 or 1299, is a prime example [Fig. 1.37]. In addition, a number of small-scale porcelain figures exist. However, Daoist figures are less common than Buddhist figures. In contrast to the Song and Yuan examples, Ming dynasty Jingdezhen religious sculptures are rare.

the two figures are indigenous forms of Guanyin and the other two are members of the Eight Immortals, an interesting combination that reflects beliefs at that time. Each celadon figure by itself is indeed not exceptional, as they all visually reflect a standard repertoire for that period, yet their quality and style suggest that they are extraordinary. These four figures are among the finest and the most intriguing examples of their kind from Longquan. It can be argued that they are unique; comparable examples are rare and there are several features that distinguish them from other sculptures produced at the Longquan kilns, especially during the Yuan period.

With the exception of the South-Sea Guanyin figure, the heights of the other three figures from the Sinan wreck are smaller than 20 cm, and in fact, their size is more akin to the three Daoist immortal figures from the Southern Song (which are 18 cm in height) rather than to existing Yuan dynasty celadon figures, which tend to be larger than Southern Song works [Figs 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7]. Moreover, the South-Sea Guanyin figure and the figure of Lan Caihe were probably made earlier than the date of the shipwreck (circa 1323), possibly as early as the late thirteenth century, based on stylistic comparison with Jingdezhen porcelain figures from the late Southern Song. Owing to the lack of prototypes or similar examples for the other two Sinan figures (Mr Ma's Wife and He Xiangtu), it is difficult to date these pieces precisely, but their close affinity in quality, style and size with the former two Sinan figures would indicate that they, too, might have been produced at the same period, that is, during the early Yuan. Significantly, unlike other ceramic types found in the Sinan wreck, the Longquan ware comprised several pieces

datable to the late Southern Song or (more likely) to the early Yuan, supporting an earlier production date for these four celadon figures.²⁶⁴

Another interesting fact about the Sinan group is that the figures, apart from that of He Xiangtu which was apparently made as an oil lamp, are entirely covered with green glazes. Such completely-glazed celadon religious sculptures were uncommon at the Longquan kilns; in almost all other instances, the faces, hands and feet of the figures were left unglazed to reveal the orange-brown body underneath, which became distinctive from the beginning of the Longquan sculpture production in the Southern Song.²⁶⁵ It is unclear why the Sinan figures were so unusually decorated. They may have been specially commissioned because fully celadon-glazed religious figures give a stronger impression of spiritual or supernatural beings than celadon-glazed and biscuit figures that resemble human beings. It is also possible that such works would be simply more durable and therefore better-suited to travel.

Another singular feature of the Sinan figures is their iron-brown spot decoration, which is applied on the two figures portraying the Wife of Mr Ma and Lan Caihe. It is uncertain when this decorative technique first appeared in

²⁶⁴ There are about 50 pieces that can be dated between the late thirteenth and the early fourteenth century. Kim Youngmi 김영미, “Sinanseon eseo balgyeondoeng Yongcheon cheongja,” 신안선 (新安船)에서 발견된 용천청자 (龍泉靑瓷) [Longquan celadons found in the Sinan wreck], in *Heugeul bijeo ogeul mandeulda*, 206-07; Kim Youngmi 김영미, “Sinanseon ui gomisul dojagi e daehan gochal,” 신안선의 고미술 도자기에 대한 고찰 [A study on the ceramic art objects from the Sinan wreck] *Dongwon haksul nonmunjip* 동원학술논문집 14 (2013): 143-62. It is noteworthy that many are vases, incense burners and tea bowls.

²⁶⁵ As far as I know, there is only one published example fully covered with celadon glaze in the collection of the Chuzhou Celadon Museum, Lishui. This is a Yuan-dynasty Guanyin shrine. See Ye ed., *Meizi chuqing*, pl. 177.

Longquan.²⁶⁶ Extant evidence indicates that Longquan ware with brown spots enjoyed a relatively short-lived popularity in the Yuan dynasty but appeared in many fine quality forms, including vases, jars, dishes and bowls. However, apart from the Sinan examples, I am unaware of other Longquan religious figures with iron-brown spots. Traditionally, this type of spotted celadon has been highly prized in Japan and is generally known by the Japanese name *tobiseiji* 飛青磁, literally ‘fluttering celadon’. Kobayashi Hitoshi 小林仁 has suggested that Longquan wares with iron-brown spots might have been made for the Japanese market, because the majority of surviving pieces have been passed down through the ages in Japan and several celadon vessels and objects with iron-brown spots were recovered from the cargo of the Sinan wreck that was bound for Japan.²⁶⁷

Interestingly, the wreck site also yielded a number of *qingbai* porcelain products embellished with similar iron-brown spots.²⁶⁸ A small female figure is a

²⁶⁶ Celadon wares decorated with iron-brown spots from other Zhejiang production sites can be traced back to the Six Dynasties. See, for example, early Yue ware bowl and lid surmounted by an animal in the Ashmolean Museum collection (EA 1956.971).

²⁶⁷ Kobayashi Hitoshi 小林仁, “Guobao ‘feiqingci huasheng’ kao: chuandao Riben de Yuandai Longquanyao heban qingci” 國寶“飛青瓷花生”考：傳到日本的元代龍泉窯褐斑青瓷 [A study of the “celadon vases with iron spots”: designated national treasures of Japan, Longquan wares of the Yuan dynasty], in *Longquanyao yanjiu*, 413. For the pieces from the Sinan wreck, see Munhwa jaecheong and Gungnip haeyang yumul jeonsigwan, *Sinanseon*, 2 *Chengja, heugyu*, pls 51, 52, 138, 139, 180. It appears that such wares were also valued in China. A small number of pieces are currently preserved in museum collections. A *yi* spouted bowl and a tripod flower stand are found in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei. See Guoli zhongyang, gugong bowuyuan gongtong lishuihui 國立中央・故宮博物院共同理事會, *Gugong cangci: Longquanyao* 故宮藏瓷：龍泉窯 [Porcelain of the Palace Museum: Longquan kilns] (Xianggang: Kaifa yinshuachang, 1962), 54, pl. 14 and 66, pl. 21.

²⁶⁸ Munhwa jaecheong Gungnip haeyang yumul jeonsigwan, *Sinanseon*, 3 *Baekja, gita yumul* 백자, 기타유물 [Porcelains and other artefacts], pls 18, 19, 120, 123, 139, 140.

notable instance of this type [Fig. 3.46].²⁶⁹ It depicts a lady seated in a relaxed



Fig. 3.46 Female Daoist immortal. Yuan dynasty. Porcelain with iron-brown spots. Height 12.8 cm. Excavated from the Sinan wreck. National Museum of Korea (Sinan 20870).

pose on a rocky pedestal, with long hair tied in a knot, wearing the immortal's leaf-woven dress decorated with brown spots. She is accompanied by a gourd-shaped bottle on her right side and a small kneeling animal below her. Judging from her appearance, this figure likely represents a female immortal. The accompanying animal could assist in clarifying her identity, but its depiction is rather ambiguous.²⁷⁰ Among the candidates who are commonly accompanied by an animal, the leading contender appears to be Magu 麻姑, whose name literally means 'Hemp Lady'. Magu is usually shown as a beautiful woman, with her hair

²⁶⁹ In addition to the present figure, a small male figure with underglaze iron-brown decoration was also found in the shipwreck (Sinan 21026, Fig. 4.39). The figure represents the monk Budai, who is noted for his round stomach and smiling face. This *qingbai* sculpture is not dotted in iron-brown, but the pigment is used to pick out details such as the edges of Budai's long loose robes and his head, similarly to the aforementioned porcelain sculpture of Xiwangmu unearthed in Hangzhou (Fig. 3.40).

²⁷⁰ There are similar porcelain female figures with an animal but without iron-brown spot decoration from the Sinan wreck (Sinan 17177 and Sindo 492).

worn in a chignon, carrying a basket of peaches or fungi and occasionally accompanied by a fawn.²⁷¹ Alternatively, the figure might be identified with Chang'e 嫦娥, the Moon Goddess, who is often depicted as a beautiful young woman with a rabbit.²⁷² Although the figure cannot be identified with certainty, in all probability, it represents a female Daoist deity popular in Yuan China.

Iron-brown spots were also commonly used in *qingbai* ware during the Yuan, as evidenced by the Sinan finds as well as numerous surviving pieces dating to this period.²⁷³ Nevertheless, it is interesting that religious figures with such decoration are nearly absent from Jingdezhen. The *qingbai* Daoist figure and the two Longquan religious figures with iron-brown spots, unearthed from the same wreck site, support the notion that this type of decoration was particularly associated with the Japanese market. However, the four Sinan figures depict religious images that were highly popular in Zhejiang during the Yuan dynasty, and such small ceramic sculptures were, for the most part, intended for domestic worship. Found on the shipwreck in an export context, the group of Longquan figures thus raises an intriguing question as to their meaning and use beyond China. Why and how, then, did such unusual celadon figures, scarcely seen in China and elsewhere, appear on the Sinan ship?

²⁷¹ Catherine Despeux and Livia Khon, *Women in Daoism* (Cambridge, MA: Three Pines Press, 2003), 95, fig. 6.

²⁷² For a discussion and illustrations of Chang'e, see Delacour ed., *La Voie du Tao*, 226, pls 48.1, 48.2.

²⁷³ Unlike Longquan wares, many *qingbai* porcelains with iron-brown spots have been found in Southeast Asia. See, for example, Oriental Ceramic Society of the Philippines, *Chinese and South-East Asian White Ware Found in the Philippines*, pls 41, 98, 99.

According to the inscriptions on the recovered bronze weights and wooden tags from the Sinan wreck, the ship was loaded at Ningbo 寧波, Zhejiang province, and was sailing to Japan when it sank in the summer of 1323. The wooden cargo tags are especially noteworthy because they provide further important clues about the possible destination and nature of the Sinan ship. The name of the goods' owners or agents are written on many of the wooden tags. Several Japanese names and titles of individuals or monks were found, although no single person has yet been identified from other textual sources.²⁷⁴ In addition, there were numerous wooden tags that bore the names of Japanese Buddhist temples or Shinto shrines, indicating that some of the cargo was destined for these places.²⁷⁵ Among the names of this category, Tofuku-ji 東福寺, a Buddhist temple in Kyoto, appears most often. Tofuku-ji was founded in 1243 by the monk Enni Ben'en 円爾辯圓 (1202-80), who led the Rinzaï 臨濟 (or Linji, in Chinese) school of Zen Buddhism after returning from his study in China with Wuzhun Shifan 無準師範 (1178-1249), an eminent Chan monk.

Other names include Chojaku-an 釣寂庵 and Hakozaki-gū 筥崎宮. Chojaku-an is a sub-temple of Joten-ji 承天寺 in Hakata 博多, today a district located in Fukuoka on the northern shore of the Kyushu Island. In fact, Joten-ji itself is the subordinate of Tofuku-ji and was established in 1242 by the monk Enni as well. Hakozaki-gū, also in Hakata, is a Shinto shrine, dedicated to Kami Hachiman 氏神八幡, the tutelary god of warriors as well as ancient emperors and

²⁷⁴ Lee Taehee, "Sinan Shipwreck Collection at the National Museum of Korea," in *Journal of Korean Art and Archaeology* 5 (2011): 107. On the names, see Munhwa jaecheong Gungnip haeyang yumul jeonsigwan, *Sinanseon, I Bonmun* 본문 [The text], 284.

²⁷⁵ Munhwa jaecheong Gungnip haeyang yumul jeonsigwan, *ibid.*, 284-88.

empresses, including the legendary Emperor Ōjin 應神天皇 (r. 270-310). It is therefore surmised that the Sinan ship that departed at Ningbo was scheduled to travel through Hakata en route to Kyoto, the probable final destination. Ningbo was one of China's leading trading ports during the Song and Yuan dynasties, when maritime trade expanded. It developed particularly strong economic and diplomatic ties with Korea and Japan. In most cases, Chinese ships bound for those countries sailed from the port of Ningbo, and it equally served as the port of arrival for Korean and Japanese ships coming to China. In Japan, the major port for international trading vessels was Hakata, which prospered as the gateway to Japan during the medieval period.

Despite the constrained political relationship between China and Japan during the Mongol era, maritime trade flourished and became even greater in volume and frequency compared with other Chinese dynastic periods.²⁷⁶ The Kamakura 鎌倉 military government (1192-1333) known as the *bakufu* 幕府 strongly supported trade with China. Many of the Kamakura leaders were indeed devotees and patrons of Zen and sponsored trading ships sent to China to collect funds to build or restore Buddhist temples with trade profits.²⁷⁷ This particular type of ship is generally referred to as *Jishajoeiryotosen* 寺社造営料唐船, merchant vessels that were dispatched under the control of the Shogunate or

²⁷⁶ The Mongols under Khubilai Khan invaded Japan twice in 1274 and 1281.

²⁷⁷ On warrior patronage of Zen in medieval Japan, see Martin Collcutt, *Five Mountains : The Rinzaï Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981). For the Japanese ships sent to China in Japanese sources, see Zuikei Shūhō and Charlotte von Verschuer, "Japan's Foreign Relations 1200 to 1392 A.D.: A Translation from 'Zenrin Kokuhōki,'" *Monumenta Nipponica* 57, no. 4 (2002): 420. The most famous were Kenchō-ji ship 建長寺船 and Tenryū-ji ship 天龍寺船. Amongst these, the Sinan ship or 'Tofuku-ji ship' is not mentioned in any written source; this might have resulted from the fact that the ship did not reach its destination, Japan.

bakufu government to subsidise the construction or expansion of Buddhist temples from the late Kamakura period to the Nanboku-chō 南北朝 period (1334-92), also known as Northern and Southern Courts period.²⁷⁸ Several scholars argue that the Sinan ship was such a commercial venture, launched on the occasion of the reconstruction of the Tofuku-ji after the temple was burned down in 1319.²⁷⁹ As the Sinan ship was not mentioned in any document, it is difficult to substantiate the nature of this vessel as well as the shipowner. Whether it was government-sponsored or private, the Sinan ship must have been one of the many trading vessels that crossed the waters of East Asian Seas during the fourteenth century.

Ceramics constitute the majority of the Chinese goods salvaged from the Sinan wreck. A total of more than 22,000 items of various types have been retrieved, of which Longquan ware made up a considerable portion of the ceramic cargo, with over 14,000 pieces.²⁸⁰ Tableware is perhaps quantitatively the most significant among the celadon finds. Bowls, dishes and related items dominated the cargo, making up over 85 % of the total shipment.²⁸¹ Although fewer in numbers compared to tableware, other forms were also represented in the

²⁷⁸ Murai Shosuke 村井章介, “Jishajoeiryotosen o minaosu,” 寺社造営料唐船を 見直す [A close look at jishajoeiryotosen] in *Minato machi to kaiki sekai* 港町と海域世界 [A port city and its encounter with the world by sea] ed. Rekishigaku kenkyukai 歴史学研究会 (Tokyo: Aokishoten, 2006), 113-43.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 128-31; Munhwa jaecheong Gungnip haeyang yumul jeonsiguan, *Sinanseon, I Bonmun*, 288.

²⁸⁰ This number includes the officially excavated artefacts and the illegally excavated ones later confiscated by the Korean authorities.

²⁸¹ Dishes form the largest group of Longquan wares from the Sinan wreck with more than 10,000 pieces, followed by bowls, with about 2,000 pieces, and ewers, with about 150 pieces. Kim, “Sinanseon eseo balgyeondoen Yongcheon cheongja,” 200-06.

assemblage. In particular, incense burners and vases were found in substantial quantities in the cargo, suggesting a strong demand for such goods in Japan at that time.²⁸² By contrast, the Sinan cargo yielded only four figures, which form one of the smallest groups of Longquan celadons recovered from the wreck. Although these figures constitute a class of their own, it is unlikely that they were destined for commercial sale. Instead, it seems most likely that they were specially acquired items by passenger(s) of the Sinan ship. One could argue that the small size figures might have been personal effects of the Chinese sailors or crew members. However, stoneware sculptures are quite heavy and too fragile to be carried and utilised as portable devotional objects during the perilous journey by sea. In fact, the wreck site also produced a handful of small Buddhist figures in



Fig. 3.47 (left) Bodhisattva. Yuan dynasty. Gilt bronze. Height 11.8 cm. Excavated from the Sinan wreck. National Museum of Korea (Sinan 24510).

Fig. 3.48 (right) Bodhisattva. Yuan dynasty. Wood. Height 14 cm. Excavated from the Sinan wreck. National Museum of Korea (Sinan 23694).

²⁸² Ibid. Approximately 500 incense burners were found in the cargo. Vases (around 200 pieces) from another important category among the celadon finds on the wreck.

bronze or wood [Figs 3.47 and 3.48]. They are much smaller and lighter than the celadon figures and thus appear to be more suitable for use on the ship.

Several of the recovered artefacts from the wreck reveal that the passengers on board were from diverse groups and nationalities.²⁸³ It is estimated that more than twenty people were travelling as owners or agents of the goods.²⁸⁴ The inscribed wooden tags suggest that there might have been some Chinese, possibly merchants, although the names cannot be clearly identified. In fact, Chinese merchants were active in the port of Hakata during the Song period. Many were native of Ningbo and played a pivotal role in the emergence and development of Hakata as an international trading centre.²⁸⁵ During the eleventh century, these traders began to settle in Hakata and the number of Chinese émigrés grew significantly.²⁸⁶ The Song merchants were called *Hakata gōshu* 博多綱首, skippers residing in Hakata, and monopolised trade with China.²⁸⁷

In addition to mercantile activities, they also developed close links with local religious institutions, which provided these men with patronage and protection. The aforementioned Joten-ji Temple in Hakata was indeed built with

²⁸³ It is thought that 50 to 60 people in all were on board, including passengers, sailors and crew members from China, Japan and Korea.

²⁸⁴ Munhwa jaecheong Gunnip haeyang yumul jeonsigwan, *Sinanseon, I Bonmun*, 284.

²⁸⁵ On medieval Hakata, see Bruce Loyd Batten, *Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace, 500-1300* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

²⁸⁶ Chinese merchants also became integrated with the Japanese community. Some of them used Japanese names and married local women. Saeki Koji 佐伯弘次, "Trade between Japan and Sung China and the Hakata Goshu 博多綱首," in *Transactions of the International Conference of Eastern Studies* 48 (2003): 47.

²⁸⁷ A *gōshu* is the head of a maritime merchant syndicate engaged in coordinating overseas trade. For more on the Hakata *gōshu*, see *ibid.*, 39-50. Also see Andrew Cobbing, "The Hakata Merchants' World: Cultural Networks in a Centre of Maritime Trade," in *Hakata: The Cultural Worlds of Northern Kyushu*, ed. Andrew Cobbing (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 63-82.

funds from an influential Chinese merchant named Xie Guoming 謝國明 (d. before May 1253) based in Hakata. He also donated lands he purchased for the Hakazaki Shrine.²⁸⁸ However, by the late thirteenth century, Chinese entrepreneurs had been replaced by Japanese traders.²⁸⁹ The Kamakura government limited the private trade by the Chinese merchants and dispatched directly trading ships to China, often allying Buddhist temples or Shinto shrines. Nevertheless, as some scholars suggest, the mercantile operations by Chinese traders residing in Hakata were still sizeable during the late Kamakura period and some of them may have been involved in the Sinan ship's trading mission with China.²⁹⁰ Therefore, it is possible that the Sinan Longquan figures were acquired by such Chinese merchants to place at household shrines, as they did back in China.

Alternatively, and more plausibly, they may have been brought by Chinese émigré masters, or perhaps more likely by Japanese monks who were returning to Japan on the ill-fated ship.²⁹¹ During the medieval period, many Japanese monks went to China and made their way on these merchant vessels that travelled

²⁸⁸ Saeki, "Trade between Japan and Sung 宋 China and the Hakata Goshu 博多綱首," 48. Xie also supported Buddhist temples in his homeland, such as the Jingshan Temple 徑山寺 at Hangzhou.

²⁸⁹ The change in the types of imported ceramics from this period onward is also noticeable after Japanese traders took over the leadership. Supply was driven by Japanese consumer demand and fine-quality wares began to be imported. Danaka Gatsuko 田中克子, "Yongcheon yogye cheongja: Hakata yujeokgun chultopum euro bon sigibyeol byeoncheon," 용천요계 청자(龍泉窯系 靑瓷): 하카다 [博多] 유적군 (遺蹟群) 출토품으로 본 시기별 변천 [Longquan-type celadons: chronological evolution through excavated artefacts in Hakata] in *Heugeul bijeo ogeul mandeulda*, 220.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ According to the inscribed wooden tags, a dozen of Japanese monks appear to have been on board. Munhwa jaecheong Gungnip haeyang yumul jeonsigwan, *Sinanseon, I Bonmun*, 284.

between Hakata and Ningbo. A great number of monks from both Japan and China crossed the sea in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.²⁹² During this time, Chan was the dominant form of Buddhism in China and Zhejiang was a thriving centre for Chinese Buddhism. The Five Mountains and Ten Monasteries System (Wushan Shicha zhidu 五山十刹制度), designated by the Song imperial court in the early thirteenth century, had its five most eminent temples of Chan Buddhism in either Hangzhou or Ningbo, and also designated ten lesser ones, most of which were located in present-day Jiangsu and Zhejiang.²⁹³ Buddhist monks from Japan travelled to Ningbo to experience direct contact with the Chinese Chan masters and the teachings and disciplines at these renowned Chinese centres.²⁹⁴ Furthermore, Japanese monks set out for Ningbo to visit the holy places of China. Mount Tiantai and Mount Putuo, both located in Zhejiang, were among the most popular pilgrimage destinations. Many eminent Japanese monks made the pilgrimage to Putuo, the sacred mountain of Guanyin. Dōgen 道元 (1200-53), a leading Zen master during the Kamakura period, was one of these Japanese pilgrims. It appears that Mount Putuo became well known in Japan when Yishan Yining 一山一寧 (1247-1317), the abbot of Puji Monastery 普濟禪寺 on Putuo, came to Japan. He was one of the chief Zen teachers among

²⁹² On Buddhist monks between Japan and China, see Zuikei and von Verschuer, “Japan’s Foreign Relations 1200 to 1392 A.D.,” 421-22.

²⁹³ Whether this system existed formally is debatable. However, Lang Ying’s account, dated to the Ming, records the names and locations of the five-mountain / ten-monastery system. Michael J. Walsh, *Sacred Economies: Buddhist Monasticism and Territoriality in Medieval China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 86-7.

²⁹⁴ On Ningbo and Japanese Buddhism, see Nara kokuritsu hakubutsukan 奈良国立博物館, *Seichi Ninpō: Nihon bukkyō 1300-nen no genryū* 聖地寧波：日本仏教1300年の源流 [Sacred Ningbo: gateway to 1300 years of Japanese buddhism] (Nara: Nara kokuritsu hakubutsukan, 2009).

the military aristocracy of Japan and served in several monasteries.²⁹⁵ The presence of the *émigré* Chinese monk from Putuo and the pilgrimage of many Japanese monks to this island probably played an important role in the spreading of the Guanyin cult connected with Mount Putuo in Japan.²⁹⁶ A Yuan dynasty illustrated map of Mount Putuo that is currently preserved in the Josho-ji Temple 定勝寺, Nagano, is testimony to the popularity of this holy site of Guanyin in Japan at that time [Fig. 3.49]. It is therefore possible that the Sinan figure of the South-Sea Guanyin was acquired by a Japanese pilgrim monk prior to his return to Japan as a souvenir or object of personal devotion.



Fig. 3.49 Illustrated Map of Mount Putuo.
Yuan dynasty. Jōshō-ji, Nagano.

As discussed earlier, the Guanyin cult grew in China since the Song dynasty, when its manifestation diversified and mingled with legend and folk tales.

²⁹⁵ For more on Yishan Yining, see Nishio Kenryū 西尾賢隆, *Chūsei no Nitchū kōryū to zenshū* 中世の日中交流と禪宗 [Sino-Japanese exchange and Zen Buddhism during the medieval period] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa gobunkan, 1999), 40-63.

²⁹⁶ Nara kokuritsu hakubutsukan, *Seichi Ninpō*, 302-03.

Guanyin of the South Sea and the Wife of Mr Ma, the two Guanyin images represented in the Sinan Longquan figures, are new indigenous forms of Guanyin that became popular among the Chinese since the Song period. However, in Japan, unlike China, interest in these newly-imported-from-the-continent Guanyin images was limited primarily to Zen and elite literary circles during that time. The Wife of Mr Ma and her related form, Guanyin of a Fish-Basket, together with the White-Robed Guanyin, were the most celebrated Guanyin forms among Zen monks.²⁹⁷ Several Chinese paintings of the Song and Yuan dynasties of these Guanyin images are presently kept in Japanese temples. A pair of paintings of the Wife of Mr Ma / Guanyin with a Fish Basket are preserved in Kōmyō-ji Temple 光明寺, Kamakura. In addition, the aforementioned Maeda painting of Guanyin as the Wife of Mr Ma was originally donated to Sunshō-an 寸松庵, the sub-temple of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺 in Kyoto, on behalf of the nun Eishin Zenjō 栄心禅定 [Fig. 3.27].²⁹⁸ It can be thus assumed that the Sinan figure of Mr Ma's Wife was probably acquired by a Zen monk during a stay in Zhejiang.

The other two Longquan figures from the Sinan wreck are more ambiguous, for they represent Daoist images. Indeed, trade with China resulted in the transfer of many religious paintings to Japan during the medieval period.²⁹⁹ The subjects of these works were not confined to Buddhism. Numerous Daoist paintings were

²⁹⁷ For an overview of the Zen pantheon, see Yukio Lippit, "Awakenings: The Development of the Zen Figural Pantheon," in *Awakenings: Zen figure painting in medieval Japan*, ed. Gregory Levine and Yukio Lippit (New York: Japan Society; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 39-43.

²⁹⁸ Information from the box inscription. Fister, "Merōfu kannon and her veneration," 423.

²⁹⁹ It appears that the Sinan ship was carrying a number of paintings and calligraphy as well. Only the wooden bars of the scrolls survived. Kim, *Sinanseon gwa dojagi gil*, 64.

brought from China and have been carefully preserved in Japanese temples alongside Buddhist paintings.³⁰⁰ For instance, in the Chion-in Temple 知恩院 in Kyoto, there is a Yuan-dynasty pair of scrolls, each featuring a Daoist immortal, Liu Haichan 劉海蟾 and Li Tieguai 李鐵拐, by Yan Hui 顏輝 (act. late thirteenth century to early fourteenth century) [Figs 3.50 and 3.51].³⁰¹ It remains unclear



Fig. 3.50 (left) *The Immortal Liu Haichan* Fig. 3.51 (right) *The Immortal Li Tieguai*. Yuan dynasty. Hanging scroll; ink and colour on silk. 161 x 79.8 cm. Chion-ji. Kyoto.

when and how these two paintings found their way to the Buddhist temple in Japan. Nevertheless, the presence of the Yuan portraits of Daoist immortals in a Japanese temple would suggest, to some extent, the Japanese monks' familiarity with some popular images of immortals from contemporaneous China, where these Daoist saints were being revered for their magical powers. Daoist immortals

³⁰⁰ See Saitō Ryūichi 齋藤龍一 ed., *Dōkyō no bijutsu* 道教の美術 [Daoist art] (Osaka: Yomiuri shinbun Osaka honsha; Osaka shiritsu bijutsukan, 2009).

³⁰¹ For discussions of the two paintings, see Little and Shawn, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 330-3; Jing, "The Eight Immortals," 215-19.

began their lives as human beings and attained *Dao* 道 [the Way], the ultimate creative principle of the universe, through meditation and self-cultivation. The vision of Dao is in fact shared with Chan Buddhism, which focuses on achieving a sudden flash of awakening. Daoist immortals are enlightened persons, so they may have served as a kind of role model for Zen monks in their spiritual cultivation.

On the other hand, it may be that celadon objects from China were highly desirable items in Japan and the Sinan Longquan figures were considered works of art beyond their intended religious meaning and use. During the Kamakura period, vast quantities of Chinese ceramics were imported to Japan. They were used in rituals, interior decoration and tea drinking events in Buddhist temples and residences of the military class.³⁰² These objects were known as *karamono* 唐物, literally ‘Chinese things’.³⁰³ Celadon was among the most sought-after types of Chinese ceramics in medieval Japan. Large quantities of Longquan ware have been unearthed in archaeological excavations from various medieval sites throughout the Japanese archipelago. In addition, many Chinese celadons have been used and preserved in Japan as *denseihin* 伝世品 [heirloom].³⁰⁴ The pair of

³⁰² On the Chinese ceramics in medieval Japan, Saeki Koji, “Chinese Trade Ceramics in Medieval Japan,” in *Tools of Culture: Japan’s Cultural, Intellectual, Medical and Technological Contacts in East Asia 1000-1500s*, ed. Andrew Edmund Goble et al. (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2009), 163-82. Also see Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, *Vessel of Influence: China and Porcelain in Medieval and Early Modern Japan* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012), 76-104.

³⁰³ *Karamono* comprises a wide variety of Chinese artefacts that were imported to Japan during medieval times. However, *karamono* were not only produced in China but also came from Korea or other regions.

³⁰⁴ Most of the bowls and dishes were unearthed from archaeological sites, while the majority of the traditionally handed down pieces consist of vases and incense burners. Nishida Hiroko 四田宏子, “Nansō no Ryūsen seiji,” 南宋の 龍泉青磁 [Southern Song dynasty Longquan celadons], in *Nansō no seiji: sora o utsusu utsuwa* 南宋の青磁: 宙をうつすうつわ [Heavenly blue: Southern Song celadons], ed. Nezu bijutsukan 根津美術館 (Tokyo: Nezu bijutsukan, 2010), 13-7.

large fourteenth-century celadon vases currently in the Kanazawa Bunko Museum 金沢文庫 are such heirlooms passed down through the ages in the Shomyo-ji Temple 称名寺, Kamakura [Fig. 3.52].³⁰⁵



Fig. 3.52 Vase (one of the pair). Yuan dynasty. Longquan ware. Handed down at Shomyo-ji, Kamakura. Kanazawa Bunko Museum.

Chinese ceramics used in the daily lives of the aristocracy and in temples are also found in Japanese handscroll paintings of the time. A prime example of these images is the *Boki-e kotoba* 慕歸繪詞, a set of illustrated handscrolls produced in 1351 as a biography of Kakunyo 覚如 (1270-1351), who served as the third patriarch of Hongan-ji Temple 本願寺 in Kyoto.³⁰⁶ The *Boki-e kotoba* depicts many types of fine imported ceramics, among them celadons from the

³⁰⁵ Kanazawa Bunko was built in the thirteenth century by Hojo Sanetoki (北条実時, 1224-76), a grandson of one *bakufu* regent (Hojo Yoshitoki 北条義時). It was originally a library adjacent to the Shomyo-ji Temple.

³⁰⁶ On the *Boki-e kotoba*, see Toru Shinbo 真保亨 ed., “Boki-e kotoba,” 慕歸繪詞, *Nihon no bijutsu* 日本美術 187 (1981).

Longquan kilns. The eighth scroll in the *Boki-e kotoba* set includes a scene with Kakunyo and a young boy [Fig. 3.53]. A bluish-green flower vase and an incense burner that are apparently Longquan celadons are placed on a low altar table. A metal candlestick is arranged to the left of the large vase. These three utensils constitute a three-piece set of altar garniture, *sangong*, and indicate that such a particular altar set had become fashionable in Japan by that time. Interestingly, vases and incense burners made up the two largest groups of Longquan ware from the Sinan wreck after dishes and bowls, which dominated the cargo. Many examples of these forms recovered from the shipwreck closely resemble examples which have been traditionally handed down in Japan.



Fig. 3.53 Scene of vol. 8 of the *Boki-e kotoba*. Nishi Hongan-ji, Kyoto.

Furthermore, there are numerous documentary sources that record the desirability of *karamono* objects in fourteenth century Japan. As the correspondence between the regent of the Kamakura Shogunate, Hojo Sadaaki 北

条貞顕 (1278-1333, r.1326), and the abbots of Shomyo-ji Temple in Kamakura shows, Chinese imports included various *karamono* artworks such as paintings, calligraphy, bronzes and ceramics, which were highly appreciated as objects to display at tea gatherings.³⁰⁷ The inventory of the objects donated by Hojo Tokimune 北条時宗 (1251-84, r. 1268-84) to the Engaku-ji 円覚寺 sub-temple, Butsunichi-an 仏日庵 in Kyoto, *Butsunichi-an kumotsu mokuroku* 仏日庵公物目録 [The inventory records of Butsunichi-an] — dated 1363 but was originally compiled in 1320 — also mentions the acquisition of such high-quality imported items from the Song and Yuan dynasties, including celadon wares.³⁰⁸ These records demonstrate warrior fascination with collecting *karamono* art objects and further indicate their close connection with the Buddhist temples at that time. It is thus reasonable to assume that the four exquisitely-modelled Longquan sculptures from the Sinan wreck may have been purchased as rare and exclusive artworks for the Japanese military aristocracy.

Although many celadon incense burners, flower vases and tea bowls have been handed down through the centuries in Japan, there is nonetheless scant evidence of imports of celadon religious figures. A small number of pieces can be found in public and private collections in Japan, but their date of importation and

³⁰⁷ Zuikei and von Verschuer, “Japan’s Foreign Relations 1200 to 1392 A.D.,” 420. It appears that Sadaaki himself owned Longquan celadons. A Longquan lidded jar (used as ossuary) was excavated from his grave. Hiroko Nishida, “The Collection and Appreciation of Chinese Art Objects in 15th-16th Century Japan, and Their Legacy,” in *Collecting Chinese Art: Interpretation and Display*, ed. Stacey Pierson (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, 2000), 10.

³⁰⁸ The original document is still kept at Engaku-ji.

their provenance are not certain.³⁰⁹ As far as I know, there are two published examples of Longquan ceramic sculptures found in Japanese monastic contexts. A celadon figure in the form of a male attendant belongs to the Shojoko-ji Temple 浄光寺, also known as Yugyo-ji 遊行寺 [Fig. 3.54]. Another comparable was unearthed at the Jyoraku-ji Temple 常楽寺 [Fig. 3.55]. These two sculptures, dating to the Yuan-Ming dynasties, are both oil lamps and probably formed part of an altar set used in the temples. Ceramic sculptures as independent devotional icons remain unknown. Small religious figures are primarily personal objects, so it is unlikely that such works would be passed down from generation to generation as heirlooms, unlike functional oil lamps. However, there might be more



Fig. 3.54 (left) Oil lamp in the form of an attendant. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 21.6 fm. Shojoko-ji, Fujisawa.

Fig. 3.55 (right) Oil lamp in the form of an attendant. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 23.5 cm. Jyoraku-ji, Yokosuka.

³⁰⁹ Idemitsu bijutsukan 出光美術館, *Chūgoku tōji: Idemitsu bijutsukan zōhin zuroku* 中国陶磁: 出光美術館蔵品図録 [Chinese ceramics in the Idemitsu collection] (Tokyo: Idemitsu bijutsukan, 1987, 1992 printing), cat. no 797; Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan 東京国立博物館, *Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan zuhan mokuroku Chūgoku tōji hen II* 東京国立博物館図版目録 中国陶磁篇 II [Illustrated catalogue of Tokyo National Museum: Chinese ceramics II] (Tokyo: Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan, 1990), nos 519, 520, 521.

examples preserved in Japanese temples, although it is difficult to know. That would explain why the Sinan group of Longquan figures is significant: not only due to their rarity but also because they serve as material evidence of cultural and religious interactions between China and Japan in the early fourteenth century.

Conclusion

The three celadon Buddhist figures unearthed in Beijing, identified as Buddha Shakyamuni, Wenshu and Puxian and examined as a set in Chapter Two, not only demonstrate the burgeoning religious figure industry at the Longquan kilns but also indicates the wide distribution and consumption of these devotional objects throughout the country during the Yuan period. The group of four Longquan figures from the Sinan wreck further stresses that consumers and uses of small ceramic religious sculptures were not confined to China. They provide valuable insights into cultural and religious interactions between China and Japan in the early fourteenth century. The sculptures were most likely produced before the date of the shipwreck, possibly as early as the late thirteenth century, and were acquired by Japanese monks prior to their return to Japan as souvenirs or objects of personal devotion / meditation, perhaps even as objects of display. Their unusual decoration, especially iron-brown spots, corroborates that they were probably made for the Japanese market.

Two of the Sinan figures represent members of the Eight Immortals — Lan Caihe and He Xiangnu, while the other two depict indigenous forms of Guanyin —

Guanyin of the South Sea and the Wife of Mr Ma. They indicate the popularity and flourishing of the cults around these deities in Zhejiang that had begun during the Southern Song. In particular, the prevalence of the South-Sea Guanyin iconography in the Longquan figures was in all probability due to the establishment of Mount Putuo, which was closely associated with the legend and cult of this form of Guanyin and became the local, national and international pilgrimage centre of Guanyin worship after the Song dynasty. The discussion of celadon Guanyin sculptures from the Ming period in Chapter Four will shed further light on the significance of this feminine form of Guanyin in local domestic worship.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Flourishing of the Longquan Religious Sculpture Industry during the Ming Dynasty

Introduction

In Chapters Two and Three we examined how the Longquan kilns embarked upon the production of religious sculpture and developed it in the Song and Yuan periods. This production, which was firmly established by the late Southern Song, underwent a considerable expansion in the Yuan. Celadon religious figures were sold across the country and also were used and appreciated beyond their original cultural context, as evidenced by the examples found in the Sinan wreck. In this chapter, we will consider the Longquan religious figure industry during the Ming 明 period (1368-1644), which was arguably the high point of ceramic figure production at Longquan.

Ming Longquan wares, in general, in contrast to Song and Yuan dynasty celadons, are understudied and their significance has until recently gone unrecognised, in part because of the lack of archaeological evidence. However, in 2006, a large-scale excavation at the Dayao Fengdongyan 大窑枫洞岩 kiln site of Longquan uncovered fine-quality celadon sherds, revealing that this particular kiln site had been producing a variety of celadon wares for court use during the

early Ming dynasty in parallel with popular wares for the general market.³¹⁰ This discovery confirmed historical documents which recorded that Longquan kilns were supervised by the Ming court, and further challenged the popular belief that the Longquan ceramic production was declining by that time.³¹¹ The archaeological excavation also yielded a few fragments of small religious figures, datable to the mid-Ming period.³¹² Despite the scarcity of sherds or intact pieces unearthed from the kiln site, most surviving examples of Longquan religious sculpture are, in fact, dated to the Ming dynasty. Among these, several remarkable items of impressive size and distinctive sculptural style are assumed to have been made in the early Ming period, from the late fourteenth century to the first half of the fifteenth century, during the time when the kilns at Longquan were under imperial patronage.

Ming dynasty Longquan sculpture production was very much a continuation of the iconography and artistic tradition that was established during the Yuan dynasty. Some Ming celadon religious figures are indistinguishable from those of

³¹⁰ High-quality celadon sherds reminiscent of large vessels housed in the Palace Museum in Beijing and the National Palace Museum in Taipei, were unearthed from the kiln site. For the excavation report, see Zhejiangsheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 浙江省文物考古研究所 et al., *Longquan Dayao Fengdongyan yaozhi chutu ciqu* 龍泉大窯楓洞岩窯址出土瓷器 [Ceramics excavated at the Dayao Fengdongyan kiln site, Longquan] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2009).

³¹¹ The Ming official accounts *Da Ming huidian* 大明會典 [Collected statutes of the Ming dynasty] record that in 1393, the Hongwu 洪武 emperor (r. 1368-98), the founding ruler of the Ming dynasty, ordered some court vessels to be produced at the Longquan kilns. According to Ming records, the manufacture of Longquan ware was still being supervised by the court in 1464. In 2009, the first major exhibition devoted to the Ming Longquan wares was held in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, in light of the new archaeological findings mentioned above. See Cai Meifen 蔡玫芬 ed., *Bilü: Mingdai Longquanyao qingci* 碧綠：明代龍泉窯青瓷 [Green: Longquan celadon of the Ming dynasty] (Taipei: Guoli gongung bowuyuan, 2009).

³¹² These include images of Shancai and Longnü and a Buddha. The former two figures as attendants of Guanyin may have been part of a sculpture dedicated to the South-Sea Guanyin. The Buddha figure also seems to be part of a sculpture which is now hard to identify. For illustrations of these excavated figures, see Zhejiangsheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo et al., *Longquan Dayao Fengdongyan yaozhi chutu ciqu*, pls 155, 156, 220. In addition to these published examples, more fragments have apparently been excavated at the kiln site.

the Yuan, but some iconographic and stylistic evolution occurred. In addition, new religious icons emerged during this period. This chapter will examine continuing traditions and new developments in Ming celadon religious sculptures to portray the trajectory of Longquan figure production after the Yuan.

Two Dated Daoist Shrines

The large dated Daoist shrine, which once belonged to the collection of Edward T. Chow, is a typical example of Longquan religious sculpture from the Ming period [Fig. 4.1].³¹³ The base of the sculpture bears an inscription which reads: 洪武乙丑四月 *Hongwu yichou siyue* [The fourth month of the Hongwu yichou (year)],



Fig. 4.1 Daoist shrine. Ming dynasty, dated 1385. Longquan ware. Height 40.2 cm.

³¹³ Published in Sheila Riddell, *Dated Chinese Antiquities, 600-1650* (London: Faber, 1979), pl.11. The shrine has been sold several times at auction (Sotheby's London, 16 December 1980, lot 324, and again at the same saleroom on 16 June 1998, lot 232, and most recently at Christie's Hong Kong (*The Imperial Sale, Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, 26 April 2004, lot 2165).

corresponding to 1385. This shrine is thus valuable in that it can help with dating comparable examples.³¹⁴ Its overall sculptural style is similar to the earlier Yuan dynasty celadon shrines. A religious image occupies the main compartment which is enclosed within an arch decorated with applied clouds and leafy scrolls, with a disk, possibly representing the sun, at the top. In this shrine, the central register represents a Daoist deity seated in a meditative posture within a niche. One hand holds a *ruyi* sceptre, the other hand rests on his lap and he wears flowing robes. His hair is swept up into a topknot and secured within a *ruyi* crown, which is backed by a circular aperture within a mandorla. Two bearded attendants stand below the deity on a platform and flank a single-horned mythical beast, probably a *qilin* 麒麟, which is recumbent on a raised plinth in the centre. A thick glaze of a bluish-green tone covers the sculpture while details of features, faces and hands are reserved in biscuit burnt orange from the firing.

The deity's clothing, distinctive crown, and particularly the *ruyi* sceptre help to identify the figure as a representation of Lingbao tianzun 靈寶天尊, the Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure. He is one of the Three Purities, Sanqing 三清, with two more deities forming the trinity Yuanshi tianzun 元始天尊, Celestial Worthy of Original Beginning, and Daode tianzun 道德天尊, Celestial Worthy of the Dao and Inner Power, who is generally identified as Laojun 老君 or Lord Lao, the 'deified' form of Laozi 老子. Together they are perceived as the pure emanations of the Dao 道, and are the highest gods of the modern Daoist pantheon. These three Daoist deities are especially revered in contemporary

³¹⁴ These are primarily large celadon Guanyin shrines, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Quanzhen temples, and their images are usually enshrined in their own pavilion. They frequently occupy the central altar, and are represented as three elderly Chinese men, who wear Daoist priestly vestments and *ruyi* crowns and sit on elevated thrones. Yuanshi tianzun sits in the centre, with Lingbao tianzun on his left and Daode tianzun on his right. Each divinity is usually shown holding a unique attribute. Yuanshi tianzun often holds a pearl in his hand, while Lingbao tianzun holds a *ruyi* sceptre and Daode tianzun a fan, as seen in the three hanging scrolls from the Baiyunguan 白云觀 [Abbey of the White Clouds] in Beijing, the principal seat of the Quanzhen sect [Figs 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4].³¹⁵



Fig. 4.2 (left) *Daode Tianzun*. Qing dynasty. Hanging scroll; ink and colour on silk. 160 x 80 cm. Fig. 4.3 (centre) *Yuanshi Tianzun*. Ming dynasty. Hanging scroll; ink and colour on silk. 140 x 80 cm. Fig. 4.4 (right) *Lingbao Tianzun*. Qing dynasty. Hanging scroll; ink and colour on silk. 160 x 80 cm. Baiyunguan, Beijing.

³¹⁵ These are from two different triptychs housed in the Baiyunguan. For more on the temple, see Vincent Goossaert, “Baiyun guan,” in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism I*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio (Richmond: Curzon, 2008), 207-10; Youmi Kim Efur, “Baiyun Guan: The Development and Evolution of a Quanzhen Daoist Temple” (PhD thesis, University of Kansas, 2012).

The idea of the Three Purities was already developed by the Tang dynasty.³¹⁶ However, it was not until in the Yuan dynasty, the period in which Quanzhen Daoism rose to prominence under Mongol patronage, that the standard trinity of the three gods and their iconography became firmly established. The Yonglegong, a Yuan dynasty Quanzhen temple in southern Shanxi province mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, has a hall dedicated to the Three Purities, Sanqingdian 三清殿. It would seem that sculpted images of the Three Purities (now destroyed) were originally placed on an altar at the centre of the hall, which still retains impressive depictions of the Daoist pantheon on its interior walls.³¹⁷ Nevertheless, early pictorial evidence of the supreme Daoist trinity can be found in the mural of the central niche in the Chongyang Hall 重陽殿, one of the three principal buildings of the Yonglegong.³¹⁸ This fourteenth-century wall painting remains in an excellent state of preservation.

The Daoist trinity image also appears on the frontispiece of Daozang 道藏, the Daoist Canon, a comprehensive collection of Daoist scriptures. The *Zhengtong daoang* 正統道藏 [Daoist canon of the Zhengtong reign], dated 1445, identifies these divinities as the source of all Daoist teachings and as rulers of the Daoist universe.³¹⁹ The finest extant woodblock edition of the early Ming Daozang is

³¹⁶ For more on the origin and development of the Three Purities in Daoism, see Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 228-32; Livia Kohn, "Sanqing," in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism II*, 840-44.

³¹⁷ Stephen Little noted that the sculptures of the Three Purities were most likely ruined in the 1940s. Stephen Little, "Daoist Art," in *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden: Brill), 729.

³¹⁸ Reproduced in Jin ed., *Yonglegong bihua quanji*, 272-73.

³¹⁹ The *Zhengtong daoang* is the earliest surviving Daoist textual collection, containing some 1400 texts. For information about this canon, see Judith M. Boltz, "Zhengtong daoang," in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism II*, 1254-57.

currently in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris [Fig. 4.5]. In addition to

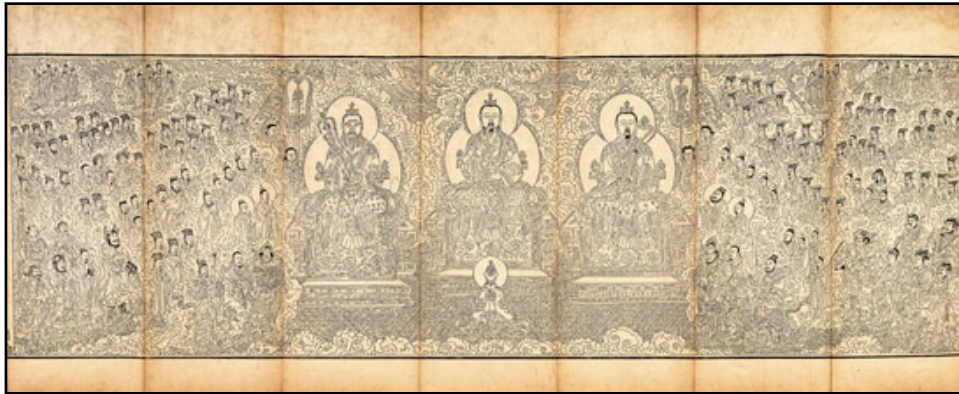


Fig. 4.5 The Three Purities from the frontispiece of *Zhengtong Daozang*. Ming dynasty. Reprint of 1598. 30 x 197 cm. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (954/1173-1).

these woodblock prints, substantial numbers of painted and sculpted works depicting the Three Purities have survived from the Ming dynasty, although few complete sets survive to the present day. The 1385 Longquan shrine is one of the earliest appearances of Lingbao tianzun, in sculptural form from the Ming dynasty. In all likelihood, it was originally made as one of a set of three shrines, each portraying one of the Three Purities, rather than as a single independent icon (although similar celadon shrines for the other two deities of the Daoist trinity are yet unknown).

The Three Purities icon appears in a Longquan shrine dated to 1406, which is now in the British Museum [Fig. 4.6]. The dating is confirmed by an incised inscription on the reverse: 永樂丙戌楚節吉旦 *Yongle bingxu chujie jidan* [On an auspicious day of the Chu Festival (Dragon Boat Festival) in the bingxu year of the Yongle reign (1406)].³²⁰ Owing to its imposing size and the depiction of many Daoist gods, this shrine has attracted more scholarly attention than any other

³²⁰ Craig Clunas and Jessica Harrison-Hall, *Ming: 50 years that changed China* (London: British Museum Press, 2014), 212.

Longquan religious sculpture. It represents the epitome of mature religious sculpture production of Longquan during the early Ming period. The shrine



Fig. 4.6 Daoist shrine. Ming dynasty, dated 1406. Longquan ware. Height 49.5 cm. British Museum (929,0114.1).

measures 49.5 cm in height and is one of the tallest Longquan examples. Its construction and decoration are also surprising. The shrine is modelled in the form of three niche compartments divided by applied cloud scrolls. Each compartment contains small Daoist figures. All are fired in biscuit and gilded and the background is covered with celadon glaze. It is uncertain when gilding was first applied on Longquan ware. The very few traces of gilding on Longquan vases with Eight Immortals (see Chapter Three) suggest that gilded decoration probably appeared in the Yuan dynasty, possibly for more important or wealthy clients. The 1046 shrine is one of the few Longquan celadon objects with its painted gilding surviving which may of course have been restored at some stage.

The British Museum Longquan shrine is exceptional for its incorporation of several images of Daoist deities; providing valuable visual evidence for the study of Daoist art. In the upper compartment a military figure, probably Puhua tianzun 普化天尊 [Celestial Worthy of Universal Transformation], who is also known as Leisheng puhua tianzun 雷聲普化天尊 [Celestial Worthy of the Sound of Thunder of Universal Transformation], is shown riding a mythical creature across the clouds. Because of his long hair and bare feet, this figure has often been identified as Zhenwu, the Perfected Warrior, who has a similar iconography. However, as Noelle Giuffrida has convincingly argued, although the deity does not hold an iron whip (*bian* 鞭), which is his attribute, he is clearly riding a *qilin*, suggesting his identity as Puhua tianzun.³²¹ The earliest known image of the god is found in the *Yushu jing* 玉樞經 [Scripture of the jade pivot], a richly illustrated



Fig. 4.7 Puhua tianzun from *Yushu jing*. Reprint circa 1403-24 of 1333 edition. Woodblock-printed; ink on paper. 34 x 12 cm (each page). British Library (ORB 99/161).

³²¹ Noelle Giuffrida, "Representing the Daoist God Zhenwu, the Perfected Warrior in Late Imperial China" (PhD thesis, University of Kansas, 2008), 143-46.

Daoist ritual document which is kept in the British Library [Fig. 4.7].³²² In addition, the Ming dynasty hanging scroll commissioned by the Wanli 万历 emperor (r. 1572-1620) in 1596, which is now in the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen, also depicts Puhua tianzun with his iconographic attributes as mentioned above. The Daoist god appears with a cadre of thunder assistants [Fig. 4.8].³²³



Fig. 4.8 *Puhua Tianzun and His Entourage*. Ming dynasty, dated 1596. Hanging scroll; ink and colour on silk. 266 x 100 cm. Ethnographic Collection, National Museum of Denmark (B. 4358).

³²² *Yushu jing* is the main scripture of the Thunder Rites of the Shenxiao 神霄 tradition and itself is attributed to Puhua tianzun, the supreme god of thunder, also referred to as Leizu 雷祖, the Thunder Patriarch. For a detailed discussion of the illustrated version of the scripture, see Maggie Wan, "Daojiao banhua yanjiu: Da Ying tushuguan cang 'Yushu baojing' sizhu ben zhi niandai ji chahua kao," 道教版畫研究：大英圖書館藏《玉樞寶經》四註本之年代及插畫考 [Research on Daoist prints: examination of the illustrations of the Scripture of the jade pivot in the collection of the British Library] *Daoism: Religion, History and Society* 2 (2010): 135-83.

³²³ Puhua tianzun and his accompanying figures in the painting were first identified by Poul Anderson, Director of the Daoist Iconography Project (DIP). "Copenhagen Scroll," Daoist Iconography Project, accessed April 29, 2014, <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/daoist-iconography/cop.html>.

The middle compartment of the shrine contains three Daoist figures seated on rectangular thrones. For many years these figures were identified as Confucius, Buddha and Laozi, the three founders of China's major religious traditions (Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism). However, they are now identified as the Three Purities, the three highest gods of the Daoist pantheon. In the centre is Yuanshi tianzun, on the right is Lingbao tianzun holding a *ruyi* sceptre and on the left is Daode tianzun holding a fan. Two female attendants stand at both sides.

The lower compartment represents a bearded deity seated on a throne, flanked by two figures, most likely one civil and one military, and also features smaller guardian figures on the corner. Behind the central figure is a dragon screen in moulded relief and in front to the right is a tortoise with a snake on its back. The central figure may be a representation of the Jade Emperor (Yuhuang shangdi 玉皇上帝), with Zhenwu, the Perfected Warrior, to the right and perhaps another Daoist god to the left, possibly Zhang Daoling 张道陵 (34-156 CE), the founding patriarch of Celestial Master Daoism.³²⁴

³²⁴ According to John Lagerwey, in modern Daoist altars of the Zhengyi tradition, the image of Zhenwu is placed opposite that of Zhang Daoling. Zhenwu represents the exorcistic function of the Daoist, Zhang his role as a civil official. Portraits of these two deities and marshals are usually presented in the 'outer altar' while the 'inner altar' is created by portraits of the Three Purities as well as the Jade Emperor. This would suggest that the figure possibly represents Zhang Daoling, who has a matching status to Zhenwu in the Daoist ritual. John Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 36-45.

In the Daoist pantheon, the Jade Emperor is the supreme ruler of the cosmos and only ranks below the Three Purities.³²⁵ The deity is usually portrayed with long hair and a moustache and is seated on a throne dressed in full imperial costume, with his crown embedded with strings of pearls that dangle from the front. He often holds a ceremonial tablet clasped in both hands before his chest, as seen in the mural of the Yonglegong's Sanqing Hall [Fig. 4.9]. However, in this



Fig. 4.9 The Jade Emperor. Yuan dynasty.
Mural. Shangqing Hall, Yonglegong.

celadon shrine the Jade Emperor is not depicted in his characteristic iconography.

The fact that in standard Daoist accounts he is immediately beneath the Three Purities in importance and assisted by Zhenwu (and various other Daoist deities)

³²⁵ The Jade Emperor is also perceived as the supreme deity of the Chinese popular pantheon. He is the head of a 'celestial bureaucracy' of gods ruling over Heaven, in the same way as the Chinese emperor rules over Earth as 'Son of Heaven' (*tianzi* 天子). By the Tang dynasty, the Jade Emperor had become widely recognised as the popular God of Heaven and was integrated into the Daoist pantheon as the highest celestial authority after the Three Purities. During the Northern Song dynasty, the worship of the Jade Emperor was made part of the imperial cult and thereafter played a pivotal role in Chinese religion. To this day, the Emperor occupies a prominent position that bridges Daoism and popular religion. For more on the Jade Emperor, see Henri Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), 88-92; Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 170-71.

in governing the cosmos strongly suggests his identity as the Jade Emperor.³²⁶ Zhenwu can be identified by his long hair and bare feet, and more importantly, by the turtle and snake intertwined at his feet.

The Daoist images present in this shrine (and identified so far) — the Three Purities, the Jade Emperor, Zhenwu, Puhua tianzun and Zhang Daoling — are some of the most important and venerated deities in Daoist temples. It may be assumed that the inclusion of such deity images reflects the popularity that all these gods enjoyed during the early Ming period. Furthermore, the arrangement of these Daoist deities in the three-level shrine, to a certain extent, demonstrates their hierarchical relationship as was established by that time. There is still uncertainty as to why such a combination of Daoist gods was created here. Furthermore, the function and meaning of this ensemble of images in Daoist ritual and practice is unclear, although the shrine might have been related to the Thunder Rites or Thunder Rituals, known as *leifa* 雷法, because of the presence of the Chief of Thunder Gods, Puhua tianzun, at the top level. As Stephen Little has pointed out, Daoist art as an academic field is in its infancy.³²⁷ Furthermore, research on Daoism in the Ming period is just beginning, which causes added difficulties in the interpretation of this ceramic sculpture in particular.³²⁸

³²⁶ Zhenwu was ordered to guard the north by the Jade Emperor to eliminate the demons and anything sinister under heaven. Shin-Yi Chao, *Daoist Ritual, State Religion, and Popular Practice: Zhenwu Worship from Song to Ming (960-1644)* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011), 4.

³²⁷ Stephen Little, "Daoist Art," 709-46.

³²⁸ Studies of Daoism in the Ming period have widely been neglected, since the Ming dynasty has generally been viewed as a time of decline for the Daoist religion.

Recent studies reveal that Daoism enjoyed popularity and continued imperial support throughout the Ming dynasty, when native rule returned to China after the Mongol Empire had come to an end in 1368.³²⁹ The *Mingshi* 明史, also referred to as the History of Ming, records that Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, the founder of the Ming dynasty (the Hongwu 洪武 emperor, r. 1368-98), had many Daoist connections and was involved in various Daoist activities. The third Ming emperor, known as Yongle 永樂 (r. 1402-24), was strongly interested in Daoism. He supported the collection of Daoist texts, sponsored temple construction, and actively engaged in Daoist practices. Daoism indeed played a significant role in the imperial family and expanded through imperial protection across the empire.³³⁰

It is almost certain that the creation of such an exceptional celadon Daoist shrine was related to strong imperial sponsorship of Daoism but also greatly benefited from the court patronage of the Longquan kilns during the early Ming dynasty. Although the inscription incised into the shrine does not indicate that it was destined for the imperial household, it must have been made by special order, similar to the Longquan Daoist shrine discussed earlier, possibly for use in a Daoist ritual in the presence of Daoist priests. These two dated celadon shrines are arguably the most important and distinctive Longquan Daoist sculptures from the Ming dynasty, yet they are not the most widely-produced type. The most prevalent

³²⁹ For a brief survey of Ming Daoism, see Pierre-Henry de Bruyn, “Daoism in the Ming (1368-1644),” in *Daoism Handbook*, 594-622.

³³⁰ Richard G. Wang has recently studied the Ming princes and their relationship with Daoism. Richard G. Wang, *The Ming Prince and Daoism: Institutional Patronage of an Elite* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

type was small-size figures intended for domestic worship like those produced in the Song-Yuan periods.

In the hierarchy of the Daoist pantheon, Zhenwu, the Perfected Warrior, does not occupy the highest level, as seen in the British Museum celadon shrine. He is nevertheless one of the most widely revered and beloved of all Daoist deities. Numerous small celadon sculptures dedicated to this deity have survived from the Ming period, suggesting that he was the single most popular Daoist god in Longquan at that time. Alongside the bodhisattva Guanyin, Zhenwu was altogether the most popular deity during the Ming period.

Zhenwu is perhaps one of the best documented and extensively studied Daoist deities due to his nation-wide prominence in the late imperial period.³³¹ Initially known as Xuanwu 玄武 or the Dark Warrior, the origins of the deity can be traced to the third century BCE. Depicted as a tortoise entwined with a snake, in Han cosmology Xuanwu was the ancient symbol of the north, one of the four animals corresponding to the cardinal directions (*siling* 四靈).³³² The god appears to have assumed a kind of anthropomorphic iconography from the Six Dynasties period. A relief sculpture displaying his traditional guise of a tortoise entwined with a snake with the addition of male figure, found on the foot slab of a stone

³³¹ The most comprehensive study of Zhenwu's cult to date is Pierre-Henry de Bruyn, *Le Wudang Shan: Histoire des Récits Fondateurs* (Paris: Indes Savantes, 2010), based on his PhD thesis, 1997. An equally important work is Shin-yi Chao, *Daoist Ritual, State Religion, and Popular Practices: Zhenwu Worship from Song to Ming (960-1644)* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), which is also based on his PhD thesis, 2003. Recently, Noelle Giuffrida has conducted an extensive research on Zhenwu imagery. Noelle Giuffrida, "Representing the Daoist God Zhenwu, the Perfected Warrior in late Imperial China" (PhD thesis, University of Kansas, 2008).

³³² For instance, in Han dynasty bronze mirrors and ceramic roof tiles, Xuanwu appears alongside other animal symbols of the cardinal directions: the dragon of the east, the tiger of the west and the bird of the south. For illustrations of roof tiles with symbols of the Four Cardinal Directions, see Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, cat. no. 9.

sarcophagus, can be dated to the late Northern Wei dynasty (386-534) [Fig. 4.10]. According to Stephen Little, this figure may represent Xuanwu as an early personification of the deity of the north.³³³

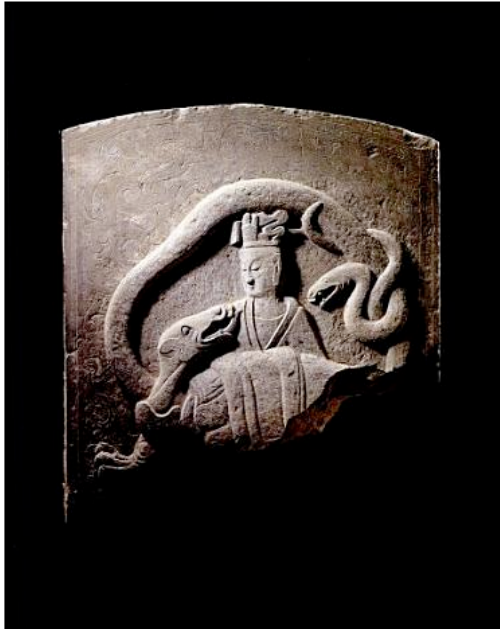


Fig. 4.10 Xuanwu on the foot slab of a sarcophagus. Northern Wei dynasty. 52 x 52 cm. Private collection.

It was not until the Northern Song dynasty that the tortoise-and-snake image of Xuanwu transformed into the anthropomorphic warrior known as Zhenwu.³³⁴ As mentioned in Chapter One, the celadon standing Zhenwu (originating in an unknown kiln) unearthed from a tomb, dated 1091, in Zhenjiang, is probably the earliest known evidence of his manifestation as an anthropomorphic warrior [Fig. 1.38]. The figure depicts the standard iconography of this Daoist god, identifiable by his long, unbound hair and bare feet with a snake and tortoise, as detailed in

³³³ Ibid., 293.

³³⁴ Under the Song emperor Zhenzong 眞宗 (r. 998-1022), in 1012, Xuanwu's name was changed to Zhenwu, and the Dark Warrior became the Perfected Warrior. This was to avoid a taboo regarding the name of his imperial ancestor Zhao Xuanlang 趙玄朗.

the *Yuanshi tianzun shuo beifang Zhenwu jing* 元始天尊說北方真武經 [Scripture of the North told by the Heavenly Worthy of the Primordial Commencement], a Northern Song hagiographic record of Zhenwu, known from a stone inscription carved in 1099.³³⁵ A Zhenwu image, similar to the celadon one, is found above the inscription on the same stone rubbing.³³⁶

Due to his healing and exorcistic powers, in the course of the Song dynasty the popular worship of Zhenwu grew steadily across social strata and spread throughout the empire. Historical records point not only to strong imperial patronage of Zhenwu at the Song court but also illustrate widespread popular belief.³³⁷ In the Yuan dynasty, the Zhenwu cult progressed further and his status was elevated to *shangdi* 上帝 [supreme emperor].³³⁸ Because of his martial qualities and association with the North, several Mongol rulers sought the deity's protection and favour for the country by granting him titles, building temples and promoting his worship. At the same time, his cult became increasingly linked with Mount Wudang (Wudangshan 武當山) in Hubei province, the place where Zhenwu was believed to have attained immortality. Despite the abundance of

³³⁵ Chao, *Daoist Ritual, State Religion and Popular Practices*, 4.

³³⁶ Reproduced in *ibid.*, fig. 1.1.

³³⁷ Many Song emperors bestowed honorific titles on Zhenwu. For the different titles attributed to Zhenwu during the Song, see Pierre-Henry de Bruyn, "Wudang Shan: The Origins of a Major Center of Modern Taoism," in *Religion and Chinese Society*, Vol. II: *Taoism and Local Religion in Modern China*, ed. John Lagerwey (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2004), 561. A number of anecdotes regarding Zhenwu cult are recorded in Hong Mai's *Yijian zhi* [Record of the listener], discussed in Chapter One. See, for example, Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China 1127-1276*, 171-72. Also see, Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 161-64.

³³⁸ In 1304, the Yuan dynasty emperor Chengzong 成宗 or Temür Khan (r. 1295-1307) accorded him the title *Xuantian yuansheng renwei shangdi* 玄天元聖仁威上帝 [Supreme Emperor of the Dark Heaven, Primal Sage and Benevolent Majesty], see de Bruyn, "Wudang Shan," 553-90.

contemporaneous literary records, depictions of Zhenwu from the Song and Yuan periods are few and most date from the Ming period.

The peak of the deity's importance came during the Ming dynasty when imperial patronage reached its apogee. Ming emperors lavishly commissioned the production of paintings and sculptures of Zhenwu and placed them in temples throughout the country. The majority of these works date to the Yongle reign in the early fourteenth century, when the emperor's personal devotion to Zhenwu led to the greatest rise in the god's truly 'national' cult. The Yongle emperor sponsored a massive reconstruction project on Mount Wudang, the central site of worship for Zhenwu, which became a major Daoist centre during the Ming period.³³⁹ The promotion of Zhenwu by the Yongle emperor contributed to the increasing veneration of the god, both at the imperial level and throughout Chinese society, as attested by the significant number of Zhenwu images that appeared during this time.³⁴⁰

Numerous dated large bronze sculptures, commissioned by Ming emperors for temple use, have survived to date. One of the earliest and largest examples, dated 1416, was commissioned and donated by the Yongle emperor for the Jindian 金殿 [Golden Hall] at the Taihegong 太和宮 [Palace of Supreme Harmony] on Mount Wudang, the sacred site for Zhenwu worship [Fig. 4.11]. This large bronze

³³⁹ Zhenwu's main temple on Mount Wudang remains one of Daoism's most important sacred sites to this day. For more on this mountain, see John Lagerwey, "The Pilgrimage to Wudang shan," in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, 293-332.

³⁴⁰ A popular novel entitled *Beiyong ji* 北遊記 [Journey to the North] recounting the story of Zhenwu's apotheosis appeared in the Ming dynasty. The novel played a role in promoting and spreading the cult of Zhenwu during that time. Translated into English by Gary Seaman, *Journey to the North: An Ethnohistorical Analysis and Annotated Translation of the Chinese Folk Novel Pei-yu Chi* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).



Fig. 4.11 Zhenwu. Ming dynasty, dated 1416. Bronze. Height 186 cm. Jindian at Taihegong on Mount Wudang, Hebei province.

sculpture presents a number of iconographic and stylistic characteristics typical of Ming Zhenwu images. The god sits with his legs pendent and bare feet set wide apart, with his hands resting on the top of his thighs. He has a long beard that extends down. His long, loose hair is combed straight back. Underscoring his role as a martial god, the armour under his robe is revealed on his chest below his neck. His robe is tied above his waist with a belt decorated with medallions. The entwined tortoise and snake appear at his feet. A similar (but later) large bronze sculpture from the British Museum shows a dragon emblazoned with five claws on the robe, suggesting that it was an imperially commissioned image of Zhenwu [Fig. 4.12]. In addition to such monumental sculptures, small-scale Zhenwu bronze images also survive in abundance from the Ming dynasty [Fig. 4.13]. Many appear to have been donated to temples and became objects of communal worship. For instance, a bronze Zhenwu in the collection of the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg contains an inscription that dates it to 1424,

indicating that it was commissioned by a group of families for placement in a temple hall.³⁴¹



Fig. 4.12 (left) Zhenwu. Ming dynasty. Bronze. Height 133 cm. British Museum (1908,7-25.2).

Fig. 4.13 (right) Zhenwu. Ming dynasty, dated 1633. Lacquered gilt bronze. Height 23.5 cm. British Museum (1992,0201.1)

It appears that the Longquan kilns started producing Zhenwu figures as early as the Yuan dynasty, although the majority can be dated to the Ming dynasty. Longquan Zhenwu images share basic iconographic and stylistic features, although minor variations do exist in the rendering of facial details, robe decorations, hand gestures and sitting posture. The earliest surviving celadon figure of this Daoist deity can be found in the collection of the Chuzhou Celadon Museum, Lishui [Fig. 4.14]. This small sculpture portrays Zhenwu seated on a rocky throne, with one hand resting on his slightly raised right knee, dressed in long robes that fall to the top of his bare feet and are secured above the waist with a court belt below his exposed armour. His broad face is modelled with a serene

³⁴¹ Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 292.

expression and his long hair is slicked back. The snake-coiled tortoise is integrated into the base. The god's hands, feet, head, face and chest in unglazed biscuit while the rest is covered in a celadon glaze. Another related example from the Tianjin Museum, dressed in long robes moulded with cloud scrolls and datable to the fourteenth century, exhibits small differences while still conforming to the basic features of the Lishui Zhenwu [Fig. 4.15].³⁴²



Fig. 4.14 (left) Zhenwu. Yuan to Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 26 cm. Chuzhou Celadon Museum, Lishui.

Fig. 4.15 (right) Zhenwu. Yuan to Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 26 cm. Tianjin Museum.

Ming dynasty Longquan Zhenwu figures are rendered somewhat differently than these earlier examples. It is very likely that large bronze sculptures of Zhenwu, such as the ones mentioned above, set the standard for small-scale sculptures of the deity produced during the Ming. A typical example is in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco [Fig. 4.16]. The god is seated on a high

³⁴² A very similar figure was sold by Bonhams San Francisco (*Asian Decorative Arts*, 9 October 2013, lot 3243). Another comparable example was sold by Christie's New York (*Christie's Interiors*, 1-2 September 2009, lot 452).

plinth with his legs pendent, each hand resting on a knee. He is dressed in voluminous wide-sleeved robes moulded in relief at the front with a dragon chasing a ‘flaming pearl’ beneath an armoured breastplate showing at the neck. Between his feet is a small tortoise entwined by a snake. This iconography of Zhenwu appears to be the god’s standard image in Longquan during the Ming period.³⁴³ However, different variations of hand gestures can be found in other Zhenwu celadon sculptures. The small figure of Zhenwu formerly in the Edward Chow Collection represents the god with his right hand holding the central section of his belt which is fastened above his midriff like a civil official [Fig. 4.17].³⁴⁴



Fig. 4.16 (left) Zhenwu. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 23 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B60P519).

Fig. 4.17 (right) Zhenwu. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 23 cm.

³⁴³ The Hubei Provincial Museum has an almost identical Zhenwu figure. Illustrated in Zhejiangsheng bowuguan ed., *Shiwai wanxiang*, 74. Another similar figure is in the Guangdong Provincial Museum. Reproduced in Feng Suge 馮素閣, “Guangdongsheng bowuguan cang Longquanyao ciqu jianshang yu yanjiu,” 廣東省博物館藏龍泉窯瓷器鑑賞與研究 [Connoisseurship and research on Longquan ware in the Guangdong Provincial Museum collection], in *Longquanyao yanjiu*, fig. 19; in colour, fig. 35. Another comparable example which once belonged to the Edward Chow Collection was sold by Sotheby’s London (16 December 1980, lot 325).

³⁴⁴ Another variation can be seen in a celadon figure sold at Sotheby’s Amsterdam (4 December 2002, lot 175). Here, Zhenwu is shown with his right hand in veneration, which is apparently an uncommon hand gesture for this Daoist god.

Smaller in size and more affordable than bronze figures, these celadon Zhenwu figures were not usually made for a specific client or patron, but instead were produced for the general market as indicated by the lack of inscribed examples. They were probably placed on household altars or possibly presented to local community temples. The emergence and proliferation of Zhenwu icons in Longquan reflects the increased importance of this deity, who was a personal guardian and was related directly to the populace as opposed to the supreme deities, like the Three Purities, essentially venerated by Daoist priests. Although imperial patronage encouraged the foundation of temples dedicated to Zhenwu throughout the empire, popular worship of the god was not limited to these places but extended onto private devotional icons, too. A large number of small ceramic figures of Zhenwu made at the Longquan kilns during the Ming period have survived in many museum and private collections, and these testify to the deity's unprecedented influence and popularity across China, including Zhejiang, at all levels of society.

Large Guanyin Sculptures

While Zhenwu was the most prominent Daoist figure among Ming period Longquan small-scale sculptures presumably made for domestic use, it was the bodhisattva Guanyin that enjoyed the greatest esteem as a Buddhist icon. During the Ming dynasty, images of Guanyin continued to appear frequently in Longquan ware. There are no Guanyin sculptures either dated or found in datable contexts

from this era, nonetheless, the majority of surviving pieces depicting this bodhisattva can be attributed to the Ming period on stylistic grounds. They follow the visual tradition developed in the preceding Yuan period. This often poses a challenge for dating and indeed many examples are difficult to pinpoint precisely. Nevertheless, significant stylistic evolution occurred in the Longquan tradition of Guanyin images during the Ming period. One of the most notable features was the increase in their size. Several of the celadon Guanyin sculptures are more than 30 cm in height and somewhat larger than their Yuan equivalents.

A Guanyin figure in the collection of the British Museum, at 35.6 cm, is among the rarest and largest free-standing figures of the bodhisattva from Longquan [Fig. 4.18]. Seated on a rocky throne, the deity's left foot is placed on a



Fig. 4.18 Guanyin. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 35.6 cm. British Museum (OA 1991.3-4.3).

lotus pod emerging from below the water and the other leg is bent and placed on the left knee. In this position, the figure portrays Guanyin on Mount Potalaka

seated on a rocky cliff overlooking the sea in the posture known as ‘royal ease’.³⁴⁵ Both the lotus flowers and the waves suggest the real location of Potalaka, the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara’s mythical realm. The deity’s eyes are cast down in an attitude of contemplation and he rests his weight on his left arm while the other arm is relaxed on his knee. Guanyin wears an elaborate network of beaded chains and pendants at the chest and a robe in addition to a circlet and bracelets. The throne is covered with a celadon glaze but the figure is fired in the biscuit.

The bejewelled garment of the bodhisattva and its ‘cloud-collar-point’-shaped edge at the elbow, in particular, relate to similarly-decorated Yuan period Guanyin figures. However, the sculpture’s large size as well as the overall quality of construction and the style of its imposing throne are more akin to the two dated Longquan Daoist shrines discussed earlier and hence suggest that this figure may be dated to the early Ming dynasty, probably the late fourteenth century.³⁴⁶ However, such free-standing Longquan Guanyin figures are almost absent from the Ming; most of the sculptures of this bodhisattva are grotto shrines which depict the popular Guanyin of the South Sea, not the traditional Potalaka Guanyin. The production of small-scale celadon shrines of the South-Sea Guanyin (which measure about 25 cm in height) continued from the Yuan into the Ming dynasty. Yet, as with figures, large-sized shrines constituted a distinct Ming feature.

³⁴⁵ The sitting posture of this Guanyin is assumed to be one of the variant forms of royal ease, yet it is uncommon. A comparable image can be seen in the Ming painted clay sculpture in the Moni Hall of Longxing Temple 隆興寺摩尼殿 in Zhengding 正定, Hebei province. For an illustration of this Guanyin image, see Howard et al., *Chinese Sculpture*, fig. 4.28.

³⁴⁶ The British Museum dates it between the Yuan and the Ming dynasty, 1300-1400.

Perhaps the earliest example of a large Ming Guanyin shrine is in the collection of Mr and Mrs Chia [Fig. 4.19].³⁴⁷ As mentioned, no dated examples



Fig. 4.19 Guanyin shrine. Ming dynasty.
Longquan ware. Height 43.5 cm.

are known from this time; however, this shrine can be confidently dated to circa 1385 because of the very similarly constructed Daoist shrine dated 1385 [Fig. 4.1]. The bodhisattva appears in a niche applied with cloud scrolls and a bird. She sits cross-legged on a dais with her palms folded on her lap. There are two acolytes, Shancai and Longnü below her flanking a lotus growing from a pond under the stepped base, as indicated by crested waves. Two shelves of the arched shrine support a vase and a bowl. This small bowl is most likely a representation of the begging bowl, which is a unique addition to the iconography of Guanyin

³⁴⁷ A very similar Guanyin shrine from the Yangzhou wenwu shangdian 扬州文物商店 is illustrated in Yangzhou bowuguan 扬州博物馆 and Yangzhou wenwu shangdian 扬州文物商店 ed, *Yangzhou gutaoci* 扬州古陶瓷 [Ancient ceramics of Yangzhou] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1996), pl. 109. Another comparable example was sold recently by Christie's South Kensington, London (*Chinese Ceramics, Works of Art and Textiles*, 18 May 2012, lot 1175).

that appeared in Longquan during the Ming period. The simple begging bowl usually represents the monk's humble way of life. It is also a symbol of Buddha's teachings on nonattachment.³⁴⁸ Bowls are therefore included in the visual representations of certain Buddhist figures. This attribute seems to be uncommon in Guanyin iconography, but interestingly, the small bowl frequently appears in the large Ming Longquan shrines devoted to the bodhisattva, possibly as a symbol of the virtues of compassion and mercy.

In addition to the new attribute, new figures began to appear as attendants of Guanyin during the Ming dynasty. A prime example of this type is the large Guanyin shrine in the Tianjin Museum [Fig. 4.20].³⁴⁹ Guanyin is typically



Fig. 4.20 Guanyin shrine. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 45 cm. Tianjin Museum.

³⁴⁸ According to one legend, when the historical Buddha began meditating under the Bodhi tree, a young woman offered him a golden bowl filled with rice. He divided the rice into 49 portions, one for each day until he would be enlightened, and threw the precious bowl into the river. Meher McArthur, *Reading Buddhist Art: An Illustrated Guide to Buddhist Signs & Symbols* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 149.

³⁴⁹ The museum dates the shrine to the Yuan dynasty. Indeed, in China, such large shrines are often attributed to the Yuan. I believe that this is because the Longquan Daoist shrine dated 1385 [Fig. 4.1], which is pivotal for the dating of these celadon shrines, is not well-known in China.

portrayed in a feminised form seated in meditation, flanked by Shancai and Longnü immediately below her alongside the parrot. A begging bowl is also present on the ledge of the shrine. Additionally, two extra attendant figures, apparently a male guardian and a female assistant, stand on a rocky platform above splashing waves. The identity of the latter is not clear, but one may be a celestial attendant (*tiannü* 天女). As for the former, although it cannot confidently be identified, the guardian figure could represent the bodhisattva Skanda, also known as Weituo 韋馱, one of the divine protectors of Buddhist monasteries and Buddhist teachings.³⁵⁰ In this guise, Weituo usually appears as a young Chinese general in full armour often holding a pestle in a gesture of devotion.

We do not know when Weituo images began to be produced, but the oldest known depictions probably date from the Yuan dynasty. The guardian bodhisattva is sometimes shown next to Guanyin as an attendant.³⁵¹ Hangzhou's Feilaifeng 飛來峰, niche no. 35, contains such a carved image of Guanyin accompanied by Weituo [Fig. 4.21]. The bodhisattva sits on a lotus pedestal in meditation pose and holds a lotus bud in her hands in front of her abdomen. On the right side of Guanyin, Weituo stands with his legs apart on a low platform, with his head turned slightly toward Guanyin. Fully clad in armour with a helmet, his hands are clasped and a staff rests on his forearms. We can also find sculpted images of

³⁵⁰ In many modern Chinese Buddhist temples, a sculpture of Weituo stands at the entrance and usually faces the main hall of a temple.

³⁵¹ Interestingly, legend has it that Weituo is closely associated with Guanyin; Guanyin appeared as a beautiful young woman in a boat on the Jialing River. She promised marriage to anyone who could hit her with a piece of silver. Only the one thrown by Weituo hit her. Guanyin thereafter manifested her true nature to Weituo and he became her disciple. There are many other versions of this legend. Wilt L. Idema, *Personal Salvation and Filial Piety: Two Precious Scroll Narratives of Guanyin and her Acolytes* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 191-92, note 6.



Fig. 4.21 Guanyin and Weituo. Yuan dynasty. Limestone. Niche no. 35, Feilaifeng, Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

Guanyin accompanied by Weituo in Buddhist temples. An excellent example dated to the Ming period is in the Hall of the Thousand Buddhas of the Shuanglin Temple (Shuanglinsi Qianfodian 雙林寺千佛殿) near Pingyao 平遙 in Shanxi province [Fig. 4.22]. Here, Weituo appears below Guanyin of the South Sea, who



Fig. 4.22 Guanyin and Weituo. Ming dynasty. Painted clay. Qianfodian, Shuanglin Temple, Pingyao, Shanxi province.

is seated in a pose of royal ease and flanked by her typical acolytes Shancai and Longnü. This is in fact a rare portrayal of this indigenous Chinese form of

Guanyin found in a Ming temple context. Moreover, many paintings and popular woodblock prints featuring Weituo flanking Guanyin have survived from the Ming dynasty, suggesting that this guardian deity became firmly established as the bodhisattva's attendant during this period.³⁵²

Another notable example of a Guanyin shrine with guardians is located in the Anhui Provincial Museum. It seems to be one of the few surviving Longquan sculptures on which visible traces of gilding remain [Fig. 4.23]. Interestingly, two



Fig. 4.23 Guanyin shrine. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 39 cm. Anhui Provincial Museum.

warrior figures stand on the lower tier of the shrine. The figure on the right hand side of Guanyin is in an identical pose and features a style similar to the figure of the guardian discussed in the previous shrine, which would indicate his identity to be Weituo. The other figure also wears a similar suit of armour and a helmet.

³⁵² See, for instance, the well-preserved early Ming dynasty murals in the Fahai Temple 法海寺. Reproduced in Yang Boxian 杨博贤, *Fahaisi bihua* 法海寺壁画 [The Fahai temple frescoes] (Beijing: Zhongguo minzu sheying yishu chubanshe, 2001), 10.

Although damaged, his hands would have originally been clasped together as is the case of his counterpart. It is not clear which deity this guardian figure depicts, but it is possible that he is a representation of Guan Yu 關羽 since in Buddhist temples the images of Weituo and Guan Yu are usually placed, facing each other, on the far right and far left of the main shrine.

Although Guan Yu was a historical figure, a general during the Three Kingdoms period, in Chinese Buddhism, in parallel with Weituo, he is revered as the bodhisattva Sangharama or Qielan 伽藍, the guardian of the Buddhist monasteries and the *dharma*.³⁵³ Many temples in China include a Sangharama Hall, called Qielandian 伽藍殿 and dedicated to Guan Yu. The painted clay image of Guan Yu dating from the Ming dynasty in the Sangharama Hall of the Shuanglin Temple, for example, resembles a Buddhist guardian god [Fig. 4.24].



Fig. 4.24 Guan Yu as a Buddhist guardian god. Ming dynasty. Painted clay. Sangharama Hall, Shuanglin Temple, Pingyao, Shanxi province.

³⁵³ Guan Yu will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The Buddhist tradition also features Buddhas and bodhisattvas flanked by the two above-mentioned guardian bodhisattvas. For instance, a Ming group of large Buddhist sculptures cast in bronze and currently at the National Museums Liverpool represents the three great bodhisattvas Guanyin, Wenshu and Puxian, known together as Sandashi, accompanied by Weituo and Guan Yu [Figs 4.25 and 4.26]. These bronze figures were once presumably placed together in a temple at Putuo Island.³⁵⁴



Fig. 4.25 (left) Weituo. Ming dynasty. Bronze. Height 79 cm. National Museums Liverpool (1981.876.112).

Fig. 4.26 (right) Guandi. Ming dynasty. Bronze. Height 88 cm. National Museums Liverpool (1981.876.111).

However, it is also plausible to assume that the warrior figures depicted in this Longquan shrine merely stand for Buddhist protectors. The Burrell Collection in Glasgow has a pair of finely modelled celadon guardian figures dating to the Ming dynasty [Fig. 4.27]. Both wear armour and winged helmets, and do not hold

³⁵⁴ For more on these bronze sculptures, see Louise Tythacott, *The Lives of Chinese Objects: Buddhism, Imperialism and Display* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 21-31.

any attribute. The figures are not identical and their faces are quite different. One figure holds his hands palm against palm with the fingers pointing upward, while the second figure has one hand clasped over the other. They were almost certainly once part of a group of Buddhist figures, placed as flanking attendants, possibly either side of Buddha or Guanyin, although their identity cannot be confirmed.



Fig. 4.27 Guardians. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 24.1 cm. Burrell Collection, Glasgow (38.243).

Another Ming example of a Longquan shrine of Guanyin flanked by guardians was formerly in the collection of Charles Russell [Fig. 4.28].³⁵⁵ It is perhaps the tallest of all celadon Guanyin shrines, standing at 51 cm. The sculpture shows the deity seated in the traditional posture of royal ease, with the right arm resting on an upraised knee and the left leg pendent, within a rocky alcove on a tiered rockwork throne. The bodhisattva is dressed in flowing robes

³⁵⁵ This shrine has been published in Bo Gyllensvärd, *Chinese Ceramics in the Carl Kempe Collection* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1965), pl. 167; Godfrey St George Montague Gomperz, *Chinese Celadon Wares*, 2nd ed. (London: Faber, 1980), pl. 113. It was recently sold by Sotheby's London (*Early Chinese White, Green and Black Wares*, 14 May 2008, lot 335).



Fig. 4.28 Guanyin shrine. Ming dynasty.
Longquan ware. Height 51 cm.

adorned with a network of beaded jewellery chains. Typically, a bird and a vase are perched on ledges amidst scrolling leafy vines. Below Guanyin are, interestingly, two begging bowls placed on either side. On the base stand two acolytes facing forward on rocky ledges above waves, flanking an incense burner, which is a new attribute, supported on a lotus leaf. Unlike the previous examples, Guanyin is not accompanied by her male and female attendants, but instead only by two male guardian figures, both of whom have their hands clasped together. The image of these small guardians wearing five-leaf crowns is somewhat similar in style to a pair of guardians portrayed on the lower tier of the British Museum's Longquan Daoist shrine dated 1406. The most interesting feature on this shrine is its Guanyin image. Here, the bodhisattva is seated at royal ease and wears a bejeweled garment virtually identical to the Yuan Longquan figures of Guanyin discussed in the preceding chapter [Figs 3.11 and 3.12]. In addition, this shrine is

probably the only extant example that depicts Guanyin in the seated royal ease pose among the Longquan shrines dedicated to this bodhisattva. Almost all celadon shrines contain an image of Guanyin seated in meditation.

Another unusual example of a Ming period Longquan Guanyin shrine with additional attendants was formerly in the Herzman collection [Fig. 4.29].³⁵⁶ This



Fig. 4.29 Guanyin shrine. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 34.3 cm.

shrine portrays Guanyin seated in a meditative pose, wearing flowing robes, pendent jewellery and an elaborate headdress. Her face and hands are left in the biscuit and painted with gold pigment. On either side of the grotto stand one male and one female figure who display gestures of devotion, with a third small figure kneeling on a lotus rising from the base in the centre, which depicts the pilgrim boy Sudhana or Shancai. The two flanking figures appear to be devout laypeople

³⁵⁶ Published in Stephen Little, *The Herzman Collection* (New York: Stanley Herzman, 2000), 31; Kaikodo, *Realms of Faith, Spring 2000* (New York: Kaikodo, 2000), cat. no. 73. The shrine was most recently sold by Christie's New York (*Fine Chinese Archaic Bronze, Ceramics and Works of Art*, 20 September 2002, lot 308).

and may have represented the owners of the shrine, similarly to the tenth-century wooden shrine to Guanyin in the Metropolitan Museum of Art discussed earlier [Fig. 3.21].

Furthermore, during the Ming period Guanyin began to be depicted as an everyday Chinese woman. The celadon shrine sold by Oriental Art Benjamin J. Stein, based in Amsterdam, epitomises the sinification, feminisation and domestication of Avalokiteshvara in China by that time [Fig. 4.30].³⁵⁷ This shrine,



Fig. 4.30 Guanyin shrine. Ming dynasty.
Longquan ware. Height 31.4 cm.

datable to the late Ming period appears to have been made in the last stage of Longquan production of Guanyin images, showing the bodhisattva as a completely feminine deity. The iconography is distinct from that of previously discussed Guanyin images. The Bodhisattva is seated in a rocky alcove with bamboo at the sides and two birds perched on rocks, holding a scroll in her right

³⁵⁷ Published in Benjamin J. Stein, *Longquan Celadons* (Amsterdam: Benjamin J. Stein, 1982), pl. 44.

hand and a rosary in her left. Her piled-up chignon is held in place by a hairpin, which is accented with celadon glaze. She wears a smiling expression. This new look of Guanyin seems to have become increasingly popular during the late Ming period. Many comparable models survive today, such as the small ivory Guanyin in the British Museum [Fig. 4.31]. Similar to the image of Guanyin, the two flanking worshipping figures, which are presumably representations of Shancai and Longnü, are equally in the guise of a common Chinese man and woman.



Fig. 4.31 Guanyin. Ming dynasty. Ivory.
Height 23.5 cm. British Museum (1945,0420.2).

This shrine is also significant in that it contains several auspicious motifs such as fish, *lingzhi* fungus, birds and bamboo, which further demonstrate that Guanyin became fully sinicised and adapted to Chinese concerns by the late Ming period. Below the two acolytes runs swirling water with two fish in brown biscuit. The fish symbolise wealth, as *yu* 魚 for ‘fish’ is homophonous with *yu* 餘 for ‘abundance and affluence’. In pairs, fish also signify marriage and the birth of

many children.³⁵⁸ In addition, the *lingzhi* fungus, depicted as clouds in applied relief at the front edge of the shrine, is believed to grant longevity. A dozen birds populate the shrine. At the top is an acolyte of Guanyin, holding a rosary in its beak. It is uncertain whether the other birds placed either on the bamboo trees or on the clouds also represent parrots, yet these birds probably stand for faithfulness and filial duty.³⁵⁹ The bamboo grove is commonly associated with Guanyin as the bodhisattva's preaching site, known as Zizhulin 紫竹林 [Purple Bamboo Grove]. In fact, Guanyin is often portrayed seated in a landscape of rocks and a bamboo grove, as in Zhao Yi's hanging scroll mentioned earlier [Fig. 3.20]. Despite being a key attribute of Guanyin iconography, it has not appeared in Longquan Guanyin shrines; the current shrine seems to be the only example that includes the bamboo grove.³⁶⁰ Considering the fact that a number of auspicious motifs are present in the shrine, it is possible that the bamboo trees may be interpreted here as symbols of longevity.³⁶¹

Perhaps the most intriguing type of Guanyin shrine from Longquan is the one devoted to Guanyin together with the Daoist god Zhenwu. For instance, the two-storied shrine recently sold by Tokyo Chuo Auction includes a figure of

³⁵⁸ A pair of golden fish is also one of the so-called 'Eight Auspicious Symbols' (*bajixiang* 八吉祥) of Buddhism, which appears to have been introduced to China with Tibetan Buddhism during the Yuan dynasty. In Buddhism, golden fish symbolise happiness and freedom from restraint.

³⁵⁹ These are the qualities granted to birds like doves. See C.A.S. Williams, *Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs: A Comprehensive Handbook on Symbolism in Chinese Art through the Ages*, 4th ed. rev. (Rutland: Tuttle, 2006), 144-45.

³⁶⁰ However, several ceramic sculptures depicting Guanyin with a bamboo grove are known from the Qing dynasty. One example is an early seventeenth century *famille verte* sculpture in the Rijksmuseum (AK-NM-12467).

³⁶¹ The pronunciation of 'bamboo' *zhu* 竹 is a homophone for 'to congratulate' *zhu* 祝. Since bamboo survives in the harshest conditions and remains green all year round, the Chinese consider it a symbol of longevity.

Guanyin in the upper tier and a figure of Zhenwu in the lower tier [Fig. 4.32].³⁶²

Guanyin is portrayed as a typical Guanyin of the South Sea (frequently seen in the Longquan Guanyin shrines discussed earlier). The bodhisattva sits on a throne with legs crossed and wears an elaborate large crown. Two acolytes — Shancai, who gestures his devotion, and Longnü, the Dragon Princess, who holds a tray of peaches — flank her on both sides together with the white parrot. Zhenwu appears seated below with his characteristic long hair and bare feet along with an entwined tortoise and snake at his feet.



Fig. 4.32 (left) Guanyin and Zhenwu shrine. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware.

Fig. 4.33 (right) Guanyin and Zhenwu shrine. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware.
Height 36.5 cm. Tokyo National Museum (TG 1353).

A similar example of a Longquan shrine of Guanyin appearing with Zhenwu is preserved in the Tokyo National Museum [Fig 4.33]. Like the previous two-storied shrine, in the upper tier Guanyin sits flanked by her boy and girl acolytes. The lower tier houses a male seated figure, representing Zhenwu wearing a loose

³⁶² *Antique Collection*, 5 May 2013, lot 2073.

robe over a military costume, flanked by two male attendants. On the platform below the deity, a snake and a tortoise are copulating. The overall structure resembles other celadon shrines. But here, the shrine is decorated with clouds as well as lotus flowers, which are uncommon in Longquan shrines. Additionally, two dragons adorn the sides of the niche containing the Zhenwu figure.

Furthermore, a unique sculptural style appears in Longquan shrines dedicated to these two deities. A notable example is the shrine in the collection of the Cincinnati Art Museum [Fig. 4.34]. It has the form of a two-storey pavilion,



Fig. 4.34 Guanyin and Zhenwu shrine. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 27.9 cm. Cincinnati Art Museum (1991.163).

which is evocative of traditional Chinese architecture, and consists of deep niches framed by a pair of dragons under a roof decorated with cloud and floral designs.³⁶³ Guanyin of the South Sea is seated in the upper niche and Zhenwu in

³⁶³ A similar double-tiered shrine was sold by Bonhams London New Bond Street (*Fine Chinese Art*, 13 May 2010, lot 325). The main deities in this shrine are Guan Yu and Zhenwu. In addition, Chuzhou Celadon Museum has a comparable Longquan shrine, but figures are missing. See Ye, *Meizichuqing*, pl. 178.

the lower niche, each flanked by a pair of attendants each.³⁶⁴ All the figures are left unglazed and were apparently once gilded, although only traces remain.³⁶⁵

It is noteworthy that an image of Guanyin, a Buddhist deity, and an image of Zhenwu, a Daoist deity, appear together in one shrine. During the Ming dynasty they were arguably the most prominent divinities in the Chinese Buddhist and Daoist panthea, respectively. These small Longquan shrines demonstrate that the two icons were revered in a manner that transcended religious boundaries because of their accessibility and widespread appeal as well as their powers as personal tutelary deities. Actually, Guanyin was adopted by Daoists as an immortal and Zhenwu was worshipped in Buddhist traditions; they were truly ‘popular’ deities.³⁶⁶

The amalgamation of Buddhism and Daoism among common believers has been apparent since the Song dynasty, as revealed in an anecdote from Hong Mai’s *Yijian zhi* [Records of listeners], mentioned in Chapter One. The celadon

³⁶⁴ The museum identifies the female deity in the upper tier of the shrine as Xiwangmu, Queen Mother of the West and the two acolytes as Jintong and Yunü. Ellen B. Avril, *Chinese Art in the Cincinnati Art Museum* (Cincinnati: Cincinnati Art Museum, 1997), no. 77. The visual representation of this figure is consistent with the Guanyin images of the bodhisattva presented in Ming Longquan shrines.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 123.

³⁶⁶ For instance, the Baiyunguan in Beijing houses a building called Cihangdian 慈航殿, which may be translated literally as the Hall of the Compassionate Sailor. The building is dedicated to Guanyin and a painted wooden sculpture of the bodhisattva, flanked by Shancai and Longnü, is placed in the central altar. Guanyin is indeed one of the new deities that have been added by the Chinese Daoist Association in 2000. It is probable that the temple created this hall to attract more believers to Baiyunguan because of Guanyin’s great popularity. It is generally assumed that the concept of the Oneness of the Three Teachings (*sanjiao* 三教; Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism) which was elaborated from the Song dynasty onward by the Quanzhen tradition, served as an important basis for accepting the bodhisattva into Daoism. The small gilt-bronze figure of Zhenwu in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago is a brilliant example that suggests the extent to which the worship of this deity had spread by the early fifteenth century (1950.1054). It bears a dedicatory inscription, dated 1439, indicating that the patron for whom the figure was made was a follower of Buddhism. Illustrated in Little and Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, no. 103.

figures of Buddha and Zhenwu found together in a tomb dated to 1091 in Zhenjiang, as discussed earlier, are probably the earliest and rarest material evidence that shows the amalgamation of different beliefs popular among the common people during the Song period. Indeed, many more ceramic sculptures representing such syncretic religious beliefs have survived from the Ming period. For instance, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and the British Museum each have one *fahua* ware figure of Zhenwu seated within a double-roofed shrine as a main image [Figs 4.35 and 4.36]. The Daoist god is shown with his symbolic



Fig. 4.35 (left) Zhenwu shrine. Ming dynasty. *Fahua* ware. Height 28.3 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B60P518).

Fig. 4.36 (right) Zhenwu shrine. Ming dynasty. *Fahua* ware. Height 29.5 cm. British Museum (2003,0729.1).

accompaniments, an entwined tortoise and snake and a pair of dragons. Above him, inside a small rooftop section, is shown a seated Buddha. The construction and details of these two shrines are similar, except that the former features two martial guardians flanking Zhenwu and that the face, hands and epaulets of the

figures as well as parts of the shrine are gilded, perhaps for a more wealthy client, unlike those of the figures in the latter shrine, which were simply reserved in biscuit.³⁶⁷

It seems very likely that only Longquan produced ceramic shrines featuring Guanyin and Zhenwu together; no such combination of gods is found in other production centres. It is notable that in these celadon shrines the bodhisattva is manifested as Guanyin of the South Sea, the female form of Guanyin closely linked with Putuo, indicating the extent to which this particular Guanyin image remained popular in the Zhejiang region throughout the Ming period.

Figures of Buddhist Monks

An important group of religious images that emerged in Longquan during the Ming dynasty were figures of Buddhist monks, people of historic significance who were themselves deified and worshiped as Buddhas and bodhisattvas and became the subjects of religious sculpture after deification. One of the most celebrated figures represented in Longquan sculpture was the itinerant monk Qici 契此, who was referred to more commonly by his nickname Budai heshang 布袋和尚, literally Cloth Bag monk. Budai's biography appears in *Song Gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 [Biographies of eminent monks of the Song], compiled by historian Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001), and in *Jingde chuandenglu* 景德傳燈錄

³⁶⁷ Although now missing, a pair of attendants may have been originally depicted in the British Museum shrine. A Ming blue and white model of a similar shrine was sold by Christie's London (*Chinese Ceramics and Works of Arts, Including Export Art*, 17 June 2003, lot 17).

[Jingde record of the transmission of the lamp], written by the monk Daoyuan 道院, who was active during the first half of the eleventh century.³⁶⁸ According to these literary records, Budai came from the Ningbo area (Fenghua 奉化) in Zhejiang and lived during the late Tang dynasty. He was well known as an itinerant soul who wandered in the Zhejiang region, begging and filling his bag, which he carried on a staff over his shoulder. These two sources provide details about Budai's appearance and attributes and also claim that Budai was an incarnation of the bodhisattva Maitreya, who is destined to be the Buddha of the Future (*Mile fo* 彌勒佛).³⁶⁹

Since Budai's death in the early tenth century, his legend was widely dispersed across the country. Chinese Buddhists began to worship him as Maitreya and believed that he would one day come to lead countless beings to salvation. The worship of Budai was probably closely associated with the increasing sinicisation and secularisation of Buddhism in China during the Song dynasty. Just as the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara transformed into a Chinese goddess, Maitreya, originally a foreign deity from India, was eventually rendered Chinese. According to Qing Chang, the growing importance of Budai as an object of worship was also related to the belief in incarnate Buddhist deities, which became popular after the Tang dynasty.³⁷⁰ Beginning in the tenth century,

³⁶⁸ For more on the textual accounts of Budai, see Qing Chang, "Indigenizing Deities: The Budai Maitreya and the Group of Eighteen Luohans in Niche No. 68 at Feilaifeng," *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* 32 (2010): 24-7. Many details about Budai were gradually added by later Buddhist writers.

³⁶⁹ Budai is said to have chanted a verse at his death that implied his true identity as a manifestation of Maitreya.

³⁷⁰ Chang, "Indigenizing Deities," 30-1.

Buddhist devotees began to worship earlier eminent monks who had appeared as incarnations of Buddhas and bodhisattvas in China. For instance, after their deaths, the two monks Baozhi 寶誌 (425-514) and Sengqie 僧伽 (617-710) were deified and believed to be manifestations of Guanyin.³⁷¹

Portraits of Budai appear to have been made as early as the tenth century. Zanning states that after Budai's death, people (both Buddhist clergy and lay devotees) from Zhejiang and Jiangsu were eager to paint his image, resulting in widespread use of the Budai imagery in the Jiangnan region during the Song dynasty. However, the earliest known image of Budai has been preserved in a rubbing, dating to the second half of the eleventh century.³⁷² It portrays the monk standing and carrying a large cloth bag over a long staff on his right shoulder. Interestingly enough, during the early Song period, Budai is not smiling. The standard smiling icon of Budai that we know of today appeared by the early thirteenth century. The most famous image of Budai is probably the stone sculpture in niche no. 68 at Feilaifeng in Hangzhou that was carved during the late Southern Song dynasty [Fig. 4.37].³⁷³ In the established iconography, Budai wears a broad smile and sits with his fat belly exposed and a hand on his cloth bag.

³⁷¹ On these divine monks and their incarnations as Guanyin, see Yü, *Kuan-yin*, 195-222.

³⁷² This ink rubbing comes from a stone carving after the Northern Song painter Cui Bai 崔白. It bears a poem inscribed by Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036-1101). For illustration, see Chang, "Indigenizing Deities," fig. 2.

³⁷³ This sculptural group, notable for the artistic quality, perhaps has probably been the most widely studied among the many stone carvings of Feilaifeng. Richard Edwards argued convincingly that this niche was created in the Southern Song period. Richard Edwards, "Pu-tai-Maitreya and a Reintroduction to Hangzhou's Fei-lai-feng," *Art Orientalis* 14 (1984): 5-50. Most modern scholars agree with a Southern Song date.



Fig. 4.37 Budai. Southern Song dynasty. Limestone. Niche no. 68, Feilaifeng, Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

From the Song period onward, Budai imagery also began appearing in small ceramic sculptures. Several Cizhou stoneware figures, decorated with polychrome overglaze enamels, were produced in north China during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.³⁷⁴ Of particular interest among these is the figure at the Wangye Museum in Shenzhen [Fig. 4. 38]. It bears an inscription on the base which reads as follows: *Mile yunbai zhishou* 彌勒云白指手 [Maitreya pointing at the white cloud].³⁷⁵ In south China, Budai figures were also manufactured, primarily in Jingdezhen, although few have survived prior to the Ming dynasty. One such rare example is an early fourteenth-century *qingbai* porcelain figure painted in iron-brown which was found at the Sinan wreck [Fig. 4.39].³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ For example, see Shenzhen bowuguan ed., *Jingcai*, pls 6, 7, 8.

³⁷⁵ For more on this Budai figure, see Yang Zhishui 杨之水, “Wangye bowuguan cang honglücai renwuxiang congkao,” 望野博物館藏紅綠彩人物像从考 [The overglazed polychrome figures in the collection of the Wangye Museum] in *Jingcai*, 292.

³⁷⁶ This figure was mentioned in Chapter Three.



Fig. 4.38 (left) Budai. Jin dynasty. Cizhou ware. Height 35.6 cm. Wangye Museum, Shenzhen.

Fig. 4.39 (right) Budai. Yuan dynasty. Porcelain with iron brown decoration. Height 8.1 cm. National Museum of Korea (Sinan 21026).

It is not clear when Longquan began producing Budai figures, but it was certainly a favoured subject by the Ming dynasty, perhaps just below Guanyin in terms of popularity among many Buddhist divinities. Longquan potters created several different Budai iconographic formulae. The small standing figure in the



Fig. 4.40 Budai. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 22 cm. British Museum (OA F.958).

collection of the British Museum illustrates a number of well-known features of this divine monk [Fig. 4.40].³⁷⁷ Budai wears long loose robes that open at the front to reveal his expansive pot belly with a rosary hanging down on his bare chest. He has a typically joyful expression of laughter on his face. In his left hand he holds a large bulging bag. Areas of exposed flesh, such as his face, chest, hands and feet, are fired in biscuit. The remainder is glazed with a thick green glaze.

Another Longquan example, currently housed in the Tianjin Museum, represents a seated Budai with his right leg horizontal and his left leg raised [Fig. 4.41]. Budai's face is virtually identical to that of the British Museum figure, suggesting that they were probably made using the same mould. In this depiction, Budai's right hand is exposed, resting on his bag while holding a tablet with his



Figs 4. 41 (left) and 4.42 (right) Budai. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 16 cm. Tianjin Museum.

³⁷⁷ A pair of almost identical figures of Budai was sold by Nagel Auktionen, Stuttgart (*Fine Asian Art*, 30 October 2013, lot 330).

left hand. In the same museum collection there is another seated figure of Budai with a left leg pendent [Fig. 4.42].³⁷⁸

The emergence and proliferation of Budai images in Longquan during the Ming would suggest the increasingly popular worship of Maitreya in the guise of Budai in Zhejiang at that time. While Budai was revered as an incarnation of Maitreya in Buddhist traditions, he was also a greatly admired figure in folklore for his happiness and plenitude as embodied by his appearance as a big-bellied laughing monk. For this reason it is likely that Budai images gained more currency among the ordinary people. Furthermore, from the Ming dynasty onwards an image of Budai as Laughing Buddha began to be installed at the entrances of temples and monasteries, which reflected the growing importance of folk traditions for the Buddhist religion. A Budai sculpture was typically enshrined in the middle, on the main altar, facing southward (that is, outside), probably to attract more believers.³⁷⁹ Why Budai was chosen to welcome visitors at the entrance of Buddhist temples is not obvious, but it might have been due to the immense popularity of his imagery among lay people during the Ming period.

Another popular deified monk image that seems to have appeared in Longquan ceramic during the Ming period was the Southern Song Chan monk Daoji 道濟 (d. 1209), popularly known as Jigong 濟公 (Sire Ji). A notable

³⁷⁸ A very similar figure is in the Hetjens Museum, Düsseldorf. Published in Adalbert Klein ed., *Chinesische Keramik: Aus Düsseldorfer Museums- und Privatbesitz* (Düsseldorf: Kunstmuseum, 1965), pl. 81.

³⁷⁹ The rear altar is dedicated to Weituo, who faces the Buddha Hall to protect the Sangha. Budai and Weituo, placed back to back, became standard in the Hall of the Heavenly Kings during the Ming period. Isabelle Charleux and Vincent Goossaert, "The Physical Buddhist Monastery in China," in *The Buddhist Monastery: A Cross-Cultural Survey*, ed. Pierre Pichard and François Lagirarde (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2003), 325.

example with biscuit-fired and green-glazed decoration is now in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco [Fig. 4.43]. The figure depicts the standard image of Daoji. Wearing a broad smile, he is seated on a rocky pedestal, resting his right arm on a tiger. He dons a long loose robe and a rosary on his bare chest. He also wears a peaked cap and carries a fan in his left hand.



Fig. 4.43 Jigong. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 20.7 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B62P158).

According to *Beixian wenji* 北磻文集 [Beixian's collected prose writings], compiled by the Chan monk Jujian 居簡 (1164-1246), which is the only contemporary Buddhist source with a biography of Daoji, he was born in Tiantai 天台 of Zhejiang in the twelfth century.³⁸⁰ He was ordained at Lingyin Temple 靈隱寺 in Hangzhou and later moved to live in Jingci Temple 淨慈寺, also in Hangzhou, until his death. Jujian's account also reveals important information

³⁸⁰ Meir Shahrar, *Crazy Ji: Chinese Religion and Popular Literature* (Boston: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998), 23-9. This is the most important study so far on the origins and evolution of the cult of Jigong.

about the life and personality of Daoji. Like Budai, he led the life of a wandering monk in the Zhejiang region and was far from the mainstream of the monastic community of his time. Furthermore, he did not abide by the Buddhist commandments; he drank wine and behaved in a peculiar manner, for which he received the nickname ‘Crazy Ji’ (Jidian 濟癡). Although his eccentric behaviour estranged him from the monastic establishment, Daoji was being revered by the laity for his powers of healing and was perceived as the Living Buddha during his lifetime.

The popular veneration of Daoji continued after his death. His lore was particularly prevalent in Hangzhou, the city where he was ordained and passed away. The earliest extant novel about Daoji, *Qiantang huyin Jidian chanshi yulu* 錢塘湖隱濟顛禪師語錄 [Recorded sayings of the recluse from Qiantang Lake, the Chan Master Crazy Ji], which enjoyed considerable popularity during the late Ming and early Qing periods, also originated in Hangzhou during the sixteenth



Fig. 4.44 Jigong. Ming dynasty. Woodblock print in the 1569 edition of the *Recorded Sayings*.

century.³⁸¹ The first edition, which is dated 1569, includes an illustration of Daoji on the front page, which is the earliest known dated image of the monk [Fig. 4.44].³⁸² Interesting enough, in this depiction he is portrayed as a barefooted monk, holding a gnarled wooden staff, which is completely different from his present-day image.

According to Meir Shahar, it was only around the turn of the twentieth century that his cult underwent a significant transformation and a distinctive iconography for this divine monk appeared; a tattered fan, a wine gourd, a small pointed hat which was usually inscribed with the character *fo* 佛 for ‘Buddha’ and a patched garment appear for the first time in lithographic editions of novels about Jigong in the early twentieth century.³⁸³ Despite his popular cult in Zhejiang, there is surprisingly little visual evidence of Jigong dating prior to that period, although from the late Ming period, icons of Jigong were apparently enshrined in both households and temples. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century novels about Jigong often mention his icons in the houses of the laity; nevertheless, these do not describe details regarding this visual representation.³⁸⁴ The *Recorded Sayings* also indicate that by the mid-sixteenth century a sculpture of Jigong was placed in the *Arhats* Hall of the Jingci Temple.³⁸⁵ However, these no longer survive.

³⁸¹ Ibid., 52-66.

³⁸² Ibid., 210.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 209.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 58. Jigong was appropriated by the monastic establishment as a saint, and therefore usually appears as one of a group of five hundred arhats.

Additionally, extant temple sculptures of Jigong dating prior to the twentieth century do not depict his now recognisable iconography.³⁸⁶

Nevertheless, the Longquan figure of Jigong shows that he probably became the subject of popular religious imagery by the late Ming period and further suggests that the monk's standard image with a small hat and a fan might have already emerged by that time.³⁸⁷ The tiger accompanying Jigong also suggests that the animal became associated with the monk from the sixteenth century onward.³⁸⁸ As Meir Shahar points out, an abundance of literary sources attesting to Jigong's popularity come from Zhejiang province and indicate that Jigong's veneration was probably limited to Hangzhou and to his native Tiantai in Zhejiang until modern times.³⁸⁹ Hence, it would not be surprising that Longquan potters produced small figures of Jigong, whose fame was primarily centred in Zhejiang in the late Ming period; no such ceramic icons are found from other production centres. This small celadon Jigong is a testimony to his popular cult that might have been confined to Zhejiang in the Ming, providing evidence of his

³⁸⁶ According to Meir Shahar, Jigong's earliest extant sculpture is dated 1748 and is enshrined at the Five-Hundred *Arhat* Hall of the Biyun Temple 碧云寺 in the outskirts of Beijing. This image is greatly different from Jigong's Longquan representation. Another image of Jigong can be found at the Five-Hundred *Arhat* Hall of the Baoguang Temple 寶光寺 near Chengdu, Sichuan. This sculpture, dated 1851, portrays him wearing a small hat and a robe with colourful patches. For more on the evolution of Jigong iconography, see *ibid.*, 208-11.

³⁸⁷ Shahar did not include the present celadon figure in his study on Jigong. He might not have known about this sculpture but it is also possible that he deliberately excluded it as accurate dating is impossible. The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco has attributed the figure to the Ming period. He Li, curator at this museum, has further noted that images of Jigong were 'routinely made' at the Longquan kilns during the Ming. See He Li, *Chinese Ceramics: The New Standard Guide* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 262, no. 511. However, a more detailed study would be needed with regard to dating these celadon Jigong figures. The base of the sculptures seems unusual for a Ming date.

³⁸⁸ Hupao 虎跑 [Running Tiger] Hill in Hangzhou was believed to be the site of Jigong's burial stupa since the late Ming dynasty.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 173.

early iconography, so far little known.

It is significant that Jigong and Budai were unorthodox historic monks who also both happened to be natives of Zhejiang. As miracle workers they enjoyed popular veneration during their lifetime, and after death they were worshipped as deities by the laity. Both of their cults were eventually adopted by the Buddhist establishment by the late Ming period. It is notable that Longquan did not produce figures of *arhats* or eminent monks who were greatly revered within the monastic community. The fact that small figures of these popular divine monks were prominent in Longquan denotes the scope of Longquan religious images, predominantly popular among the common people in Zhejiang.

Figures of Popular Gods

In addition to the large array of Buddhist and Daoist deities, figures of the Chinese popular gods were made in the Longquan kilns during the Ming dynasty. The fluid entity of popular religion is hard to define and a detailed discussion of its conceptual issues is beyond the scope of this study.³⁹⁰ Popular religion does not fit under the heading of one of China's three main religious traditions, Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. It refers to the beliefs and practices shared by most people, regardless of explicit religious identification with the three labels. Most of the gods of Chinese popular religion had originally been human beings,

³⁹⁰ On the notion of popular religion and its surrounding issues, see Stephen F. Teiser, "The Sprits of Chinese Religion," in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3-37; Philip Clart, "Chinese Popular Religion," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Chinese Religions*, ed. Randall L. Nadeau (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 219-35.

but ascended to divine status after their death because of their extraordinary merits or popular reputation.

Guandi 關帝 [Emperor Guan] was probably the most prominent icon of the Chinese popular pantheon. He was a famous legendary general of China's Three Kingdoms period, known in his lifetime as Guan Yu 關羽 (160-219 CE). He was celebrated in posterity for his martial prowess and exemplary moral qualities and regarded as the embodiment of loyalty, uprightness and bravery.³⁹¹ Guandi was primarily apotheosed into a god of war assuming the role of patron deity of soldiers. Over the centuries he has nevertheless come to assume a number of guises and functions; he became the god of wealth as well as the patron saint of numerous trades and professions. Guandi was also revered as a god of literature since he is believed to have studied Confucianism. Furthermore, Guandi was incorporated into the Buddhist and Daoist pantheons. In the Buddhist context, as mentioned earlier, he is worshipped as Sangharama bodhisattva or Qielan, protector of the Buddhist teachings. In Daoism, he is known as Guansheng dijun 關聖帝君 [Saintly Emperor Guan] whose supposed role is the subduing of demons and evil spirits.

It appears that Guandi's popularity grew from the Song period onward, with the appearance of vernacular novels and plays, namely *Sanguozhi pinghua* 三國志評話 [The story of the Three Kingdoms] and *Sanguozhi yanyi* 三國志演義 [The romance of the Three Kingdoms]. The historical Guan Yu, the hero in these

³⁹¹ After his death, the stories of the Three Kingdoms have widely circulated through lore and drama, and the myth of Guan Yu has become increasingly popular. The earliest record on Guan Yu is *Sanguozhi* 三國志 [Record of the Three Kingdoms] by Chen Shou 陳壽 (233-97).

popular literary works, also appeared as a subject of paintings. A hanging scroll by the early Ming painter Shang Xi 商喜 (act. early fifteenth century) in the Palace Museum, Beijing presents an episode from the above texts: Guan Yu capturing his enemy general Pang De 龐德 (170-219 CE) [Fig. 4.45]. This work, which is one of the earliest pictorial testimonies of Guan Yu's image, shows the heroic figure with his characteristic features as a military general in full armour under a green robe with a red face and a long well trimmed beard.



Fig. 4.45 Shang Xi. *Guandi Capturing an Enemy General*. Ming dynasty. Hanging scroll; ink and colour on silk. 200 x 237 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

Beginning in the Ming dynasty, numerous temples were constructed in his honour throughout China and some were built on a grand scale under imperial patronage.³⁹² Different emperors of later Chinese dynasties indeed bestowed a number of elevated titles on Guandi, worshipping him as a protector of their rule. It was finally in 1615, under the Wanli reign, that the deity was accorded the

³⁹² Romeyn Taylor, "Official Altars, Temples and Shrines Mandated for All Counties in Ming and Qing," *T'oung Pao* 83 (1997): 114-16.

imperial title *di* 帝, for which he is now known as Guandi or Emperor Guan.³⁹³

The growing number of references to Guan Yu in popular literature, combined with strong imperial support, were the main reasons for the dramatic rise of his cult across the country during the course of the Ming dynasty.

Several surviving small Longquan sculptures dedicated to Guandi testify to the significance ascribed to this popular deity as the subject of mass devotion at that time. A typical Ming example of a Guandi figure is in the Tokyo National Museum [Fig. 4.46]. It incorporates the most popular iconography of the fifteenth century, as in Shang Xi's painting. Guandi is seated on a rockwork base, with his feet apart, both hands resting on his thighs. He wears full armour under a long robe. The hair is pulled up and tucked under a cloth cap, which is tied with a ribbon at the top. The deity might have had a well-groomed beard but it is now



Fig. 4.46 (left) Guandi. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 22.1 cm. Tokyo National Museum (TG2111).

Fig. 4.47 (right) Guandi. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 35.6 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B69P28).

³⁹³ Prasenjit Duara, "Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, Chinese God of War," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (November 1988), 783.

missing. A more elaborate example can be found in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco [Fig. 4.47]. The sculpture represents Guandi sitting on a throne, dressed in full armour with dragon-form breastplate worn under a long robe that drapes over his left shoulder and between his legs, where it is pulled up over his left knee. With a fierce expression on his face, Guandi wears an intricate crown, which shows refined hand-carving highlighted with gold. Like the previous figure, the face and armour are left unglazed, revealing an orange tone colour, whereas other remaining areas, including the robe, are green-glazed.

In addition to the depiction of Guandi as a martial deity, his image as a civil deity also appeared in Longquan ware. A celadon figure in the collection of Mr T.L. Njoo shows the god in the form of a standing official [Fig. 4.48]. He wears a long, flowing robe, held together by a belt and a cloth hat, which is tied to the



Fig. 4.48 Guandi. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 34.75 cm. Private Collection.

crown and has a long mantle hanging down over his shoulders.³⁹⁴ It is possible that such a representation of Guandi in civil costume refers to his role as a god of wealth, which became increasingly popular by the late Ming era. It would be plausible to assume that the varied appearance of Guandi indicates the respect he received in different modes of worship.

As a provider of good fortune and prosperity, the God of Wealth, known as Caishen 財神, he was indeed one of the most commonly worshiped deities of the Chinese popular religion. Caishen started as a great Chinese hero, and was later deified and venerated in both the Buddhist and Daoist traditions. Although the deity was worshiped throughout the year, a special sacrifice was specially offered during the Chinese New Year celebrations. His image was one of the most popular of the New Year prints to be placed on the inner door at home, in the hope that the



Fig. 4.49. Caishen. 20th century.
Woodblock print; ink and colour on paper.
British Museum (1982,1217,O.53).

³⁹⁴ The Palace Museum, Beijing, has a comparable figure of Guandi in the guise of a Confucian scholar. For an illustration, see Zhu ed., *Longquanyao qingci*, pl. 274.

god of wealth would bless one's family with a lucky and prosperous New Year [Fig. 4.49].

There are many gods of wealth in China, and different gods are worshipped in different places. These gods of wealth are identified with several legendary and historic figures of ancient China and can be divided into the following two groups: the martial god of wealth and the civil god of wealth. The best known god of wealth may be Zhao Gongming 趙公明, who is often depicted as a general with a black face and a long beard, wearing full armour and an iron cap. Guan Yu is in fact another famous form of the martial god of wealth. On the other hand, the civilian god of wealth is usually depicted as Bi Gan 比干 or Fan Li 范蠡. They are commonly portrayed as civil officials holding attributes such as a *ruyi* sceptre or a golden ingot in one hand.³⁹⁵ Interestingly, these gods of wealth sometimes appear as a group and are worshipped together. In Baiyunguan mentioned earlier, the hall dedicated to Caishen (Caishendian 財神殿) includes three different images of the god of wealth: Bi Gan in the middle, Zhao Gongming on the left, and Guan Yu on the right.

Huge quantities of woodblock prints depicting Caishen's military and civilian aspects are known today and the great majority date to the late Qing dynasty. Interestingly, sculpted images of this deity are scarcely recorded and most surviving examples seem to be ceramic figures. Images of the civil god of wealth were created in Longquan. They are probably among the earliest extant

³⁹⁵ For illustrations of these four gods of wealth, see He Sanqian 禾三千 and Wu Qiao 吳喬 ed., *Daojiao tianzun dixian jishen tushuo* 道教天尊地仙吉神圖說 [Illustrations of Daoist pantheon] (Haerbin: Helongjiang meishu chubanshe, 2005), 267-71.

Caishen icons. One such example is now located in the Wenzhou Museum [Fig. 4.50]. A man is dressed like a civil official and wears a minister's gauze cap, holds a golden ingot in his right hand and a *ruyi* sceptre in his left hand. In this iconography, the deity may be identified as Bi Gan since the latter attribute is commonly associated with him.³⁹⁶ Another figure of the civil god of wealth can be seen in the Beijing Art Museum [Fig. 4.51]. Here, the god of wealth is seated on a throne with his hands clasped beneath his outer robe, wearing a square-shaped hat. He is flanked by two attendants, each holding an attribute of the god of wealth, a *ruyi* sceptre and a golden ingot (now damaged).



Fig. 4.50 (left) Caishen. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 16.9 cm. Wenzhou Museum.

Fig. 4.51 (right) Caishen with two attendants. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. Height 23.6 cm. Beijing Art Museum.

Another type of popular deity presented in the Longquan figures is Kuixing 魁星, the God of Examinations, whose cult became particularly important in Ming times among examination candidates. Kuixing, as his name

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 270.

suggests, is believed to reside in the star group Kui, the trapezoidal section of the Great Dipper. A notable example of a Kuixing image in the Zhejiang Provincial Museum shows his typical iconography [Fig. 4.52].³⁹⁷ The god in the form of a



Fig. 4.52 Kuixing. Ming dynasty. Longquan ware. 12.5 cm. Zhejiang Provincial Museum.

demonic figure stands on the head of a large fish, probably a carp, with one foot raised in the air and holds a writing brush in his left hand. Kuixing is often associated with Wenchang 文昌, the God of Literature, as seen in a hanging scroll by Ding Yunpeng, dated 1596, in the British Museum [Fig. 4.53].³⁹⁸ It depicts Wenchang descending on clouds above an ocean, wearing Ming literatus robes

³⁹⁷ A similar Kuixing image used as a water-dropper can be found in the Chuzhou Celadon Museum. The museum dates it to the Yuan dynasty. See Ye, *Meizi chuqing*, pl. 224.

³⁹⁸ Wenchang is identified with several different historical figures: Zhang Yu 張育 of the Tang dynasty or Zhang Yazi 張亞子 of the Jin dynasty. For a fuller discussion of Wenchang, see Terry F. Kleeman, *A God's Own Tale: The Book of Transformation of Wenchang, the Divine Lord of Zitong* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994). A small Dehua group of Wenchang and Kuixing is in the British Museum (1980,0728.54). Published in Harrison-Hall, *Catalogue of Late Yuan and Ming Ceramics in the British Museum*, pl. 17:10. Another comparable Dehua example is in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond (85.1457). Illustrated in John Ayers and Yuan Bingling, *Blanc de Chine: Divine Images in Porcelain* (New York: China Institute Gallery, 2002), pl. 46.

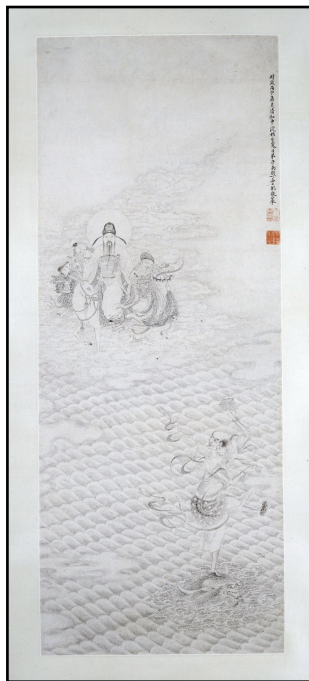


Fig. 4.53 Ding Yunpeng. *Wenchang, the God of Literature*. Ming dynasty, dated 1596. Hanging scroll; ink on paper. 117.5 x 46.4 cm. British Museum (1936,1009.0.129)

and holding a sceptre as a symbol of his official position. Below, in the foreground, Wenchang's acolyte Kuixing holds a writing brush in his right hand and a rice measure in his left, while standing on the head of a dragon.³⁹⁹ It is possible that Longquan produced figures of Wenchang in parallel with those of Kuixing, who is an associate or servant of this god of literature, although no such celadon figures are presently known of.

³⁹⁹ Kuixing is shown holding a *bi* 笔 [writing brush] and a *sheng* 升 [rice measure] which together make the pun 'literary success'. Anne Farrer, *'The Brush Dances and the Ink Sings': Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy from the British Museum* (London: British Museum Press, 1990), cat. no. 37.

On the Decline of Longquan Religious Sculpture Production

The *Longquan xianzhi* 龍泉縣志 [Gazetteer of Longquan county], published in the twenty-seventh year of the Qianlong 乾隆 reign (1735-96) of the Qing dynasty, recorded that ‘after the Chenghua 成化 and Hongzhi 弘治 reigns (1465-1506), the bodies became so coarse and the colour so unattractive that the wares could no longer satisfy those with refined tastes’.⁴⁰⁰ As this account reveals, after the mid-Ming dynasty, the Longquan ceramic industry appears to have gradually declined. The reasons for the decline are unclear, but several factors may have contributed. One of the key contributing factors was probably the success of their competitors at Jingdezhen, which flourished as China’s porcelain production centre under imperial patronage since the Yuan dynasty. By the Ming era, the fashion for heavily potted celadon wares progressively shifted to thinly potted, translucent porcelain. Blue and white porcelain from Jingdezhen became the dominant product.

With the decrease in the number of Longquan kilns, the quality of production further deteriorated. The body of vessels became thick, the glaze grew thin and transparent and the carving became rough. Even so, Longquan seems to have remained an important site beyond Jingdezhen. Literati of the late Ming period often mentioned Longquan celadon in their writings. For example, Gao Lian’s 高濂 *Zunsheng bajian* 遵生八箋 [Eight discourses on the art of living], published in 1591, notes that, ‘For arranging plum flowers in wintertime,

⁴⁰⁰ English translation from Fung Ping Shan Museum, *Green Wares from Zhejiang*, 47.

Longquan large vases are a necessity'.⁴⁰¹ This suggests that Longquan ware (whether antique or not) might still have held a position in domestic consumption in China during the late Ming period. Although on a much reduced scale, celadon production indeed continued in Longquan into the Qing dynasty. A range of vessels was still being made there for the local market.⁴⁰²

Despite Longquan's continuous ceramic vessel production, it would seem that the manufacture of religious sculptures had virtually ceased by the seventeenth century, during the late Ming period. The absence of the image of the Child-Giving Guanyin (Songzi Guanyin 送子觀音), one of the indigenous female forms of Avalokiteshvara, among Longquan figures could provide a crucial clue to support this speculation. The Child-Giving Guanyin has its roots in the White-Robed Guanyin and is usually presented wearing a white robe and holding a baby in her arms or on her lap.⁴⁰³ This new image of Guanyin was one of the most popular during the final period of the Ming dynasty, when the cult of White-

⁴⁰¹ Cai ed., *Bilü*, 15.

⁴⁰² One of the Qing kilns discovered was located at Longquan Sunkeng 孫坑. See Zhu ed., *Longquanyao qingci*, 28 (in Chinese); 48 (in English), pls 287-300. Furthermore, a few dated pieces are known from this period, among which a small dish dated by inscription to 1651 acquired by Sir Percival David and currently housed in the British Museum (PDF 298).

⁴⁰³ The bodhisattva's power to grant children is stated in the Universal Gateway Chapter of the Lotus Sutra, and as early as the eleventh century accounts of miracles attached to this scripture were being reported. The Lotus Sutra mentions Guanyin's power of granting children to worshipers who desire one regardless of gender. In most of images of Child-Giving Guanyin, the sex of the child is not apparent, but there are a few pieces showing a baby boy. This may be because the birth of a male heir was regarded as the most auspicious cause for congratulations in Chinese Confucian society. See Yü, *Kuan-yin*, 135, fig. 3.10.

Robed Guanyin as the giver of children, especially sons, became firmly established in China.⁴⁰⁴

It is likely that the iconography of Guanyin with a child was widely represented in late Ming ceramic figures, which were often made in popular Cizhou and *fahua* wares [Figs 4.54 and 4.55]. However, this manifestation of



Fig. 4.54 (left) Guanyin with a child. Ming dynasty. Cizhou ware. Height 35.4 cm. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B60 P523).

Fig. 4.55 (right) Guanyin with a child. Ming dynasty. *Fahua* ware. Shanxi Provincial Museum.

Guanyin seems non-existent in Longquan-ware figures, suggesting that the Longquan kilns might have stopped production of figures before the iconography

⁴⁰⁴ It is noteworthy that prior to the Ming, the depiction of Guanyin seldom included a child, held either in her arms or placed on her lap. It is generally assumed that the religious basis for this iconography came from Buddhist scriptures, but its artistic rendering may have been influenced by the Christian iconography of the Virgin and Child. For a discussion of Guanyin and Virgin Mary, see Eva Zhang, “Kannon-Guanyin-Virgin Mary: Early Modern Discourse on Alterity, Religion and Images,” in *Transcultural Turbulences: Towards a Multi-Sited Reading of Image Flows*, ed. Christiane Brosius and Roland Venzhuemer (Heidelberg: Springer, 2011), 171-90; Jeremy Clarke, *The Virgin Mary and Catholic Identities in Chinese History* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 24-31. However, there is in the Palace Museum, Beijing a Yaozhou celadon figure of Guanyin holding a child dating to the Jin dynasty. Published in Feng Yongqian 馮永謙, *Zhongguo taoci quanji 9: Liao Xixia Jin 中國陶瓷全集 9: 遼西夏金* [The complete works of Chinese ceramics, Vol. 9: Liao dynasty, Xixia dynasty, and Jin dynasty] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 2000), pl. 192. This sculpture deserves a more detailed study. The emergence of Guanyin with child iconography also needs to be re-examined.

of the Child-Giving Guanyin became prevalent in China. The absence of this iconography is significant in that Guanyin had been the foremost devotional icon to appear in Longquan celadon figures. Instead, this feminine form of Guanyin was the most frequently presented in Dehua porcelain figures produced during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries [Figs 4.56 and 4.57].



Fig. 4.56 (left) He Chaozong 何朝宗 (act. early 17th century). Guanyin with a child. Qing dynasty. Dehua ware. Height 28 cm. Rijksmuseum (AK-MAK-658).
Fig. 4.57 (right) Guanyin with a child and two attendants. Late Ming or early Qing dynasty. Dehua ware. Height 38 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum (19-18860).

It would be beyond the scope of this study to examine the figures of the Dehua kilns. Nevertheless, the decline of the religious sculpture industry in Longquan seems to be connected with the rise of the Dehua kilns that happened concurrently. Popularly known as *blanc de Chine* in the West, Dehua ware refers to a distinctive type of white porcelain with a thick, unctuous glaze that was produced in the town of Dehua 德化 in Fujian province.⁴⁰⁵ Porcelain production

⁴⁰⁵ The term *blanc de Chine* originated in the mid-nineteenth-century as a connoisseurs' term. Meaning in French 'White from China', this term has remained popular in the West.

began in Dehua in the Song dynasty but rose to prominence around the turn of the seventeenth century, a time when the Dehua kilns focused on making figures.⁴⁰⁶ Religious figures produced in Dehua constitute not only the most characteristic examples of this ware but also represent one of the greatest achievements of Chinese ceramic sculpture. No other kilns in China could compete with the mastery of Dehua in the production of small, sculpted images in terms of both quality and quantity.⁴⁰⁷

Modern scholars have long puzzled over the sudden emergence of religious images in Dehua during the late Ming period. Over the last few decades, much research has been conducted into Dehua ware and the reasons for the development of the porcelain figure industry there are becoming clearer. It has been suggested that the thriving craft industry in Fujian in late Ming times encouraged the growth of porcelain sculpture production. Dehua potters appear to have used models available in other materials such as ivory, soapstone or rhinoceros horn.⁴⁰⁸ More recently, Yuan Bingling has opined that the production of white Dehua figures was

⁴⁰⁶ The earliest known dated figure from Dehua is the figure of a popular god, probably Guandi as in the guise of the god of wealth. It is dated by inscription to 1610 and now in the British Museum (1930,1113.1). Published in Harrison-Hall, *Catalogue of Late Yuan and Ming Ceramics in the British Museum*, pl. 17:9.

⁴⁰⁷ Dehua-ware representations of religious figures are perhaps most renowned for their naturalistic rendering and subtle, detailed modelling. Since the late seventeenth century, many such pieces from Dehua, initially made as objects of worship, were exported in huge quantities for the European market. They became some of the most favoured of China's export wares during the eighteenth century. The largest collections of Dehua figures are indeed in museums and private collections in Europe. In all probability, these religious figures were brought to Europe as exotic curiosity items. They were also frequently mounted in *ormolu* (gilt bronze) as room decorations and assumed new functions. For instance, the perfumer (*cassolette*) in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore includes a Dehua figure of Budai and a cup mounted in French *ormolu* bower adorned with Vincennes porcelain flowers (54.2261). Illustrated in Ayers and Yuan, *Blanc de Chine*, 32, fig. 6.

⁴⁰⁸ Derek Gillman, *Chinese Ivories: from the Shang to the Qing* (London: The Oriental Ceramic Society, 1984), 50; Jan Chapman, *The Art of Rhinoceros Horn Carving in China* (London: Christie's Books, 1999), 250-54.

possibly linked to the popularity of Manichaeism in late Ming Fujian, as in Manichaeism white represents light and purity.⁴⁰⁹

It is enigmatic why Longquan ceased the production of religious figures, which had provided much business for a long period of time. After the mid-Ming dynasty, many Longquan stoneware kilns were forced to close down due to the popularity of porcelains from other kilns and I would suggest that a large number of Longquan potters probably moved south to Dehua where porcelain production began to flourish. Dehua, located in central Fujian province, is geographically close to Longquan, in the neighbouring Zhejiang province. The migration of skilled Longquan potters, who had developed a centuries-long tradition of religious figures, might have been instrumental in the growth of religious sculpture production at the Dehua kilns. This may explain why Dehua did suddenly arise as the prime production centre of small religious figures during the late Ming period. Although the Longquan production of religious figures came to a halt, the tradition of this particular ceramic form continued in Dehua.

Conclusion

The two dated Daoist shrines examined in Chapter Four epitomise the mature Longquan sculpture production, reached by the early Ming period. Their impressive size and distinctive sculptural style were probably due to the considerable benefits of imperial patronage of Daoism as well as of the Longquan

⁴⁰⁹ Manichaeism followers worshipped the White Buddha. See Yuan Bingling, "Dehua White Ceramics and Their Cultural Significance," in *Blanc de Chine*, 40-1.

kilns during the early Ming period. Among the many Daoist deities, Zhenwu, the Perfected Warrior, occupied a prominent place in Longquan. The proliferation of Zhenwu figures probably sprang up from his unprecedented national popularity as a personal guardian, like Guanyin. Many surviving celadon examples demonstrate the spread of his cult throughout Zhejiang by the Ming period.

The South-Sea Guanyin was steadily popular in Longquan during this period. New attributes and new attendants of the bodhisattva began to appear. The deity also began to be depicted as a common Chinese woman, which reveals the sinification, feminisation and domestication of Avalokiteshvara in China by that time. The Guanyin of the South Sea was also depicted with Zhenwu, which reflects the amalgamation of deities and beliefs associated with Buddhism and Daoism into Chinese popular religion during the Ming dynasty. This combination is only seen on Longquan ceramic sculpture, substantiating the flourishing cult of this deity in the Zhejiang region.

Furthermore, a new category of religious images appeared in Longquan during the Ming era. These were images of indigenous Chinese monks — Budai and Jigong, natives of Zhejiang, who were themselves deified and venerated as Buddhas and bodhisattvas by the laity. The popular gods made up another important group of the Longquan figures during this period, indicating that, by the Ming, the worship of deities in the pantheon of Chinese popular religion had developed to a significant degree in the Zhejiang region. Like those of the Song-Yuan periods, the Ming sculptures from Longquan have revealed hitherto

unexplored or unrecognised aspects of the study of both religion in Zhejiang and ceramic sculpture.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has presented a comprehensive and in-depth survey of ceramic religious figures produced at the kilns in Longquan during the Song, Yuan and Ming periods. My aim has been not only to make information available about the figures, which constitute a small but significant part of Longquan celadon production, but also to illuminate, through an original analysis of the material, aspects of the popular devotion they reflected and shaped. The systematic in-depth evaluation of the figures' iconography together with the study of diverse sources have allowed me to illustrate how closely these celadon figures were related to the religious environment of Zhejiang. In conclusion, my research demonstrated that ceramic figures provide substantial material evidence for the development of popular devotion and religious visual imagery in late imperial China.

Modern scholarship has focused almost entirely on the study of ceramic figures produced for burial, primarily in early imperial China from the Qin dynasty through to the Tang dynasty. This thesis offered fresh insights into Longquan ceramic religious figures, which have mostly gone unnoticed in both the fields of Chinese ceramics and Chinese religious sculpture. It has approached this material using, for the first time, an interdisciplinary method. Longquan figures were situated in the history of their medium and were proven to be an important part of the long, rich history of Chinese ceramic sculpture.

Ceramic is often ignored by religious art historians because of its humble status. However, religious figures made of ceramic survive in large quantities and

show a much greater iconographic variety than those made of more valuable materials. As described in Chapter One, few examples of ceramic religious sculptures before the tenth century have survived. However, a substantial corpus of extant examples since the Song period suggests that the production of small ceramic religious figures flourished then across China. The proliferation of such small icons may have been due to the practice of personal devotion which became increasingly popular after the Song dynasty along with the growing popularisation of Chinese religions. The growth in religious sculpture production appears to have been connected with the development of the Chinese ceramic industry, which flourished unprecedentedly during the Song dynasty; hundreds of kilns appeared all over the country, and improvements were instituted in nearly every aspect of production.

Longquan ware was among of the most important types of ceramic ware produced during the later Chinese dynasties. Longquan potters developed a distinctive sculptural tradition and created a large variety of religious images during a pivotal period in the development of ceramic religious sculptures. The thesis discussed the development of Longquan religious figures from a contextual perspective, tracing important social, cultural and material developments.

Longquan rose to national prominence as the greatest production centre of celadon ware in the Southern Song period when Zhejiang became China's political, economic, cultural and religious centre after the establishment of the new capital of the Southern Song dynasty in Hangzhou. It was during this period that religious figures first appeared in Longquan. The three small figures of Daoist

immortals discussed in Chapter Two — Zhongli Quan, Han Xiangzi and He Xiangu — were unearthed at the Dayao kiln site and demonstrate that the production of ceramic religious figures was well established at the Longquan kilns by the late Southern Song period. They also testify to the growing popularity of the Eight Immortals, who became a subject of veneration in the south at the time of the Mongol unification of China, along with the dissemination of the northern Quanzhen sect of Daoism. The Longquan figure of He Xiangu, the earliest surviving visual evidence of this female immortal, suggests that she was probably added to the group in the south. Perhaps the modern configuration of the Eight Immortals was formed there as well.

In the absence of a larger sample of Longquan religious figures from the Southern Song period, it is difficult to draw a representative picture of their production and consumption. However, several contemporary *qingbai* porcelain figures from Jingdezhen were found in Zhejiang. This indicates an increasing demand for small ceramic religious figures in that province by the thirteenth century, as well as their association with the local religious landscape. In particular, the three Guanyin figures discussed in Chapter Two represent the earliest Chinese feminine form of the bodhisattva — the White-Robed Guanyin, whose legend and cult were closely associated with the Upper Tianzhu Monastery in Hangzhou, the foremost pilgrimage site of Guanyin worship during the Song period. These figures clearly indicate the growing cult of indigenous forms of Guanyin in Zhejiang which triggered the production of large quantities of Guanyin figures in Longquan during the subsequent Yuan and Ming periods. I

also suggested that these biscuit- and *qingbai*-glazed sculptures may have given impetus to the production in Longquan of similarly decorated religious figures — with exposed biscuit for flesh and glaze for clothes and surroundings.

As noted in Chapter Three, during the Yuan dynasty, sculpture production blossomed in Longquan making it the foremost manufacturer of small religious figures. The consumers and uses of these objects were not limited solely to Zhejiang but, expanded outside the region. The three Buddhist figures unearthed in Beijing which form a Shakyamuni Buddha triad — the historical Buddha, Manjushri and Samantabhadra — are discussed in this chapter for the first time as a set, and they illustrate the wide distribution and consumption of celadon religious figures in Yuan China. Similar figures were also shipped abroad, as evidenced by the Sinan wreck group. Found in a dated context, these figures expanded our knowledge of Yuan ceramic sculptures from Longquan, a largely unexplored category of material. They were studied systematically for the first time here, and particular attention was paid to their uses and significance outside of China. It was demonstrated that all of them portray religious images popular in Yuan China, especially in Zhejiang. Two figures were shown to represent Daoist immortals — most likely Lan Caihe and He Xiangnu — confirming the continuing popularity of the cult of the Eight Immortals in the region during the Mongol era.

The other two figures from the wreck represent the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara manifested in Chinese female forms: Guanyin of the South Sea and the Wife of Mr Ma (also known as Guanyin with a Fish Basket). As noted in this chapter, these are the earliest known examples of Guanyin figures from

Longquan. The cult of Guanyin played the most significant role in the development and growth of religious figure production in Longquan during the Yuan and Ming periods. I have suggested that the emergence and prevalence of Guanyin images in Longquan figures — in particular, the Guanyin of the South Sea — were linked with the establishment of Mount Putuo as a new pilgrimage centre for Guanyin worshippers, succeeding Upper Tianzhu in Hangzhou after the Song period. As noted in this chapter, few examples of the South-Sea Guanyin images are known prior to the late Ming. However, numerous Yuan and early Ming celadon figures of this particular form of Guanyin survive, suggesting that the cult of the South-Sea Guanyin was concentrated in Zhejiang before it gained national prominence by the sixteenth century.

Furthermore, I proposed that these four celadon figures may well have been produced earlier than the date of the wreck — as early as the late thirteenth century — and were probably acquired by Japanese monks prior to their return to Japan as souvenirs or objects of personal devotion / meditation or perhaps even as objects of display. Their unusual decoration, such as their iron-brown spots, are very rare on other Longquan figures, thereby suggesting that they were probably produced for Japanese customers. They are a tangible record of the cultural and religious interactions between China and Japan in the unique circumstances of early fourteenth century East Asia.

In the final chapter, it was noted that sculpture production in Longquan continued well into the Ming dynasty. A large number of surviving figures are dated to this period although they are generally ignored in Ming ceramic studies.

The size of sculptures became larger than Yuan equivalents. The Longquan kilns produced grotto shrines for particular deities, which constitute the most characteristic style from this era, in contrast to the free-form figures of the preceding periods. The two dated Daoist shrines discussed in this chapter were shown to epitomise mature Longquan sculpture production, which had peaked by the early Ming period. I suggested that their impressive size and distinctive sculptural style were probably due to the considerable benefits of the imperial patronage of Daoism and the Longquan kilns in the early Ming period. The two shrines — and the British Museum example in particular — illustrate some of the most popular and most worshipped deities of the Daoist pantheon at the time, such as The Three Purities, the Jade Emperor, Zhenwu, Puhua tianzun and Zhang Daoling as well as their hierarchical relationship. Among the many Daoist deities, Zhenwu, the Perfected Warrior, occupied a prominent place in Longquan production, probably as a result of the deity's unprecedented popularity as a personal guardian, similar to Guanyin. Numerous surviving celadon examples attest to the widespread cult of Zhenwu in Zhejiang by the Ming period.

The South-Sea Guanyin remained most popular in Longquan during this period, as discussed in Chapter Four. Furthermore, new attributes (e.g. the begging bowl) and new attendants of the bodhisattva (e.g. Skanda or Weituo), began to appear. The deity also began to be depicted as a common Chinese woman, which reveals the sinification, feminisation and domestication of Avalokiteshvara in China by that time. The Guanyin of the South Sea was also depicted with Zhenwu, which reflects the amalgamation of the deities and beliefs

associated with Buddhism and Daoism into Chinese popular religion during the Ming dynasty. As noted, this is only discerned on Longquan ceramic sculptures, suggesting the lasting popularity of the South-Sea Guanyin in Longquan. As such, the Guanyin figures from Longquan do not only demonstrate the significance of this devotional icon in popular worship in Zhejiang but also delineate the evolution of Guanyin iconography parallel to the development and transformation of Avalokiteshvara in China, thereby adding substantial new information to our knowledge of Guanyin imagery.

Furthermore, it was demonstrated that a new category of religious images appeared in Longquan during the Ming era. These were images of indigenous Chinese monks, who were themselves deified and worshipped as Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Budai and Jigong, both of whom were native to Zhejiang, were unorthodox, itinerant monks whom the laity in the region venerated as miracle workers. In addition to Buddhist and Daoist deities, the popular gods made up another important group of the Longquan figures during this period. The group of Guandi, Caishen and Kuixing indicates that, by the Ming period, the worship of deities from the pantheon of Chinese popular religion had developed to an unprecedented degree.

Although the aim of this thesis was to offer a comprehensive study of Longquan ceramic religious figures, the discussion was by no means exhaustive. The figures examined are representative of the production in question and serve as departure points for discussion. There may be more as yet unknown examples in museum and / or private collections as well as in Japanese temples. In addition,

more figures are continuously being discovered at archaeological sites both within and outside of China. For example, large quantities of Longquan ware from the Song to the Ming dynasties, including some religious figures, have been unearthed in the Lingga Islands of Indonesia.⁴¹⁰ Unfortunately, these figures could not be included in this study, due to insufficient information and considerations of length. However, these limitations should be seen in a positive light, as they indicate the strength of this exciting developing field.

Our exploration of Longquan celadon figures revealed the ways in which small ceramic sculptures portraying religious images are illustrative of the rich material culture of Chinese religion. In particular, these sculptures provide a direct glimpse into the spiritual lives and religious customs of ordinary Chinese in the pre-modern period. This thesis offered a new understanding of the cultural and religious significance of this group of small ceramic religious figures and contributed to building a bridge between religious studies and Chinese art history. Moreover, it provided a framework within which to contextualise new discoveries, aiding in their categorisation and classification.

⁴¹⁰ Lin Yiqiu 林亦秋, “Xunzhao Longyamen: Yinni Song Yuan Ming Longquan qingci de xingzong,” 尋找龍牙門: 印尼宋元明龍泉青瓷的行踪 [Finding the Lingga Islands: Longquan celadons from Song to Ming dynasty in Indonesia], in *Longquanyao yanjiu*, 459-71, fig. 8.

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